READER'S DIGEST | SMALL AND PERFECTLY INFORMED | NOVEMBER 2016

HEALTH · MONEY · TRAVEL · RECIPES · FASHION · TECHNOLOGY

Reader's digest

NOVEMBER 2016

WIN £2,000!
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24 Christmas Gift Ideas

PAGE 55

Rescuing Africa's "Witch Children"

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EDITOR'S LETTER



AS A GENERAL-INTEREST MAGAZINE, we well understand the pleasure of random information. But no one takes more joy in this than Sandi Toksvig, November's cover star. Whether she's chatting as the new host of *QI* or explaining how to make Angel Delight explode, she's a wellspring of wonderful facts! Read our interview on p20.

Speaking of inspiring people, imagine giving up everything and moving to Africa to rescue children accused of witchcraft. Well, that's what Anja Ringgren Lovén did—you can read her amazing story on p102. The technically minded, meanwhile, will enjoy our feature on air travel on p90, and if you're already thinking of Christmas but you're stuck for present ideas (if you're me, in other words), we have 24 suggestions on p55.

Finally, it's once again time to enter our 100-Word-Story Competition. The top prize is £2,000, so turn to p65 for details and get scribbling. We can't wait to read them!



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All things bright and beautiful

Guy Fawkes Night and Diwali light up Britain's skies this month. Diwali is one of the most beautiful celebrations in the world, but how much do you actually know about it? Our ultimate guide explains everything you need to know about the festival of light. Visit **readersdigest.co.uk/Diwali**

If all the loud bangs and noises are making your pets nervous, check out our guide to keeping them calm through even the most sensational firework displays. Visit **readersdigest.co.uk/firework-pets**

Missing *Bake Off*?



Another series may have come to an end, but we're refusing to let go of *The Great British Bake Off* just yet. Why not create fireworks in the kitchen and bake up an alternative to traditional Guy Fawkes toffee apples with some delicious toffee-apple cupcakes? Get the recipe at **readersdigest.co.uk/toffee-apple-cupcakes**

OVER-BEARING PARENTS

These adorable parents are teaching their cubs how to be fully grown grizzlies.







See the full gallery at **readersdigest.co.uk/bear-parents**

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Over to You

LETTERS ON THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE

We pay £50 for Letter of the Month and £30 for all others

★ LETTER OF THE MONTH...


Over to You

LETTERS ON THE JULY ISSUE

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★ LETTER OF THE MONTH...

I loved the section in Michael Foley's "If I Ruled the World" about how we should all play more. I work in a primary school and I recently came across a poster stating that when kids play, they're actually working because they're learning through play. I think much older "children" could learn from this too. Adults often get tunnel vision and lose their ability to rectify problems easily, becoming locked in a cycle of stress, anger and demotivation.

If a small dose of me-time in a paperwork-free zone were introduced daily to the working environment, creativity and reflection would be encouraged. As a result, many of the problems we encounter during the working day might be solved more quickly and effectively.

SUE WATT, *Fife*

HAPPY CAMPER

Thank you for your feature "Best of British: Campsites". The great thing about caravanning is that you can go to places and if you don't like them, you just hook up and go somewhere else. If you book a holiday and you don't like it, you're stuck!

The places you stay while camping are a lot cheaper as well. Being out in the countryside, getting fresh air and going for walks with your children, who can play all day...there are many benefits.

I've made a note of your camping-site suggestions. They definitely look worth a visit!

PAUL MADDOCKS, *Herefordshire*

A FAITHFUL NON-BELIEVER

Your feature "Live Better, Help Often, Wonder More" struck a chord with me. I go to church but I'm an atheist. People wonder why I go, but I like to support my local church and enjoy singing. I value the services in an odd way, which has little or nothing to do with belief and which, in fact, always seems to involve a reassertion of unbelief.

Sanderson Jones's type of church service for the godless therefore definitely appeals to me. I think they might just catch on.

DYLAN CLARSON, *Norfolk*

A MAN OF MANY TALENTS

The interview with Danish actor Mads Mikkelsen ("A Journey to the Dark Side") resonated with me. My husband is a struggling playwright and dreams of the day when one of his plays makes it to the West End or gets turned into a film. Mads is in favour of low-budget and blockbuster projects, and I think it's great he gives writers like my husband a chance to show what they're worth.

I hadn't realised Mikkelsen trained as a gymnast in his youth and studied dancing at a ballet academy. He has many strings to his bow.

EVA TRUDEL, *Cambridgeshire*

FERN AND FATHERS

I enjoyed learning more about Fern Britton in "I Remember". I've always enjoyed watching her on television; she comes across as a really nice person.

She remembered that she hardly saw anything of her father growing up. I think, years ago, this was quite common. I don't remember seeing much of my own father, and at times he even seemed like a stranger. He worked long hours and I must have only spent ten minutes before bedtime conversing with him a couple of times a week. I've made sure not to make the same mistake with my own children.

COLIN McCALEY, *London*

HEELS AND MEMORIES

Melanie Lodge's childhood memories of Blackpool in "Over to You" made me chuckle, as it reminded me of an event from my youth. While walking down Southport Pier, I saw a very well-dressed young lady get her stiletto heel caught in the slats. She was really panicking until my dad asked her to step out of her shoe; he managed to free the offending article and she gingerly carried on down the pier. I bet she got the train back up!

BARBARA CASSELL, *Wigan*

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Paul Maddocks' letter about campsite holidays in "Over to You" made some good points about caravanning. We should also mention motorhomes, which, for some, are a way of life.

My parents have had a succession of caravans and motorhomes during the last 35 years. Now in their 70s, they continue to tour Europe several times a year, loving every minute of it. They're already planning another decade of travel—their only concern being affordable travel insurance after the age of 80.

Mobile holidays must surely be one of the most enjoyable ways to spend those long days of retirement, in which many people face a gaping hole in their lives where work used to be.

SUE WATT, *Fife*

CHALLENGING MR JONES

I wish to take issue with Steve Jones as the second recent contributor to "If I Ruled the World" to imply that only religious people are intolerant and illogical. I'd suggest that the atheistic autocracies of the past century have put on a pretty good show of intolerance. And most liberal writers are as cocksure of their beliefs—and as outraged over any deviation from them—as any religious person I've read.

As for Richard Dawkins' assertion that one out of 5,000 religious can't be the authentic one, he should apply this reasoning to all systems and shades of opinion that have ever existed in politics. Then he has to accept all of them and live in confusion, or reject all of them and live in chaos.

NOTA KREIMAN, *London*

In "If I Ruled the World", Steve Jones says he'd give free travel passes on all public transport to anyone who sold their car. Presumably he's never lived outside of London with its 24-hour service?

Here in Lincoln, a reasonably large city, there are many villages just four miles away where the last bus leaves at 7pm. Many outlying villages have one bus an hour. There are only two direct trains a day to London.

It's the price we pay for living in a pleasant rural environment; we choose to live here. However, unless we live as it was 100 years ago—both living and working within a few miles—the simple fact is we need cars. We have a few cycle paths: some are a rutted, overgrown single track a yard away from huge lorries on the road and others, for no reason, just stop halfway along the main roads.

It would be marvellous to come out of my house and get on a bus or subway, but in most of rural Britain it just isn't realistic.

SHIRLEY DEVLIN, *Lincolnshire*

HUNGRY FOR KNOWLEDGE

As a nation we struggle with eating well, so I was interested to read "What To Eat Now". We know certain things are bad for us—the "experts" always go on about it—and we also know we should be eating healthily, but opinions keep changing and we become more and more confused. For example, my mother was told to eat lots of liver years ago when she was pregnant. Now I'm expecting and I'm told not to eat any!

So what's the answer? The latest advice in your feature did hold some surprises for me and I certainly have a better idea now.

KENDRA AITKINS, *Merseyside*

SAVE THE TREES

I was filled with admiration when reading "Save The Forest" about the Austrian couple who are taking on the loggers to save Europe's last great forest wilderness.

Each year, 13 million hectares of forest disappear from our planet due to human activity—a frenetic pace of 100 square metres per second, mostly caused by agriculture. Forest degradation is held responsible for 18 to 20 per cent of greenhouse gas accumulation in the atmosphere. It's a key contributor to global warming.

If we don't stop deforestation, rainforests will have disappeared by 2040. We all need to do our part.

JOSIE DRURIE, *Flintshire*

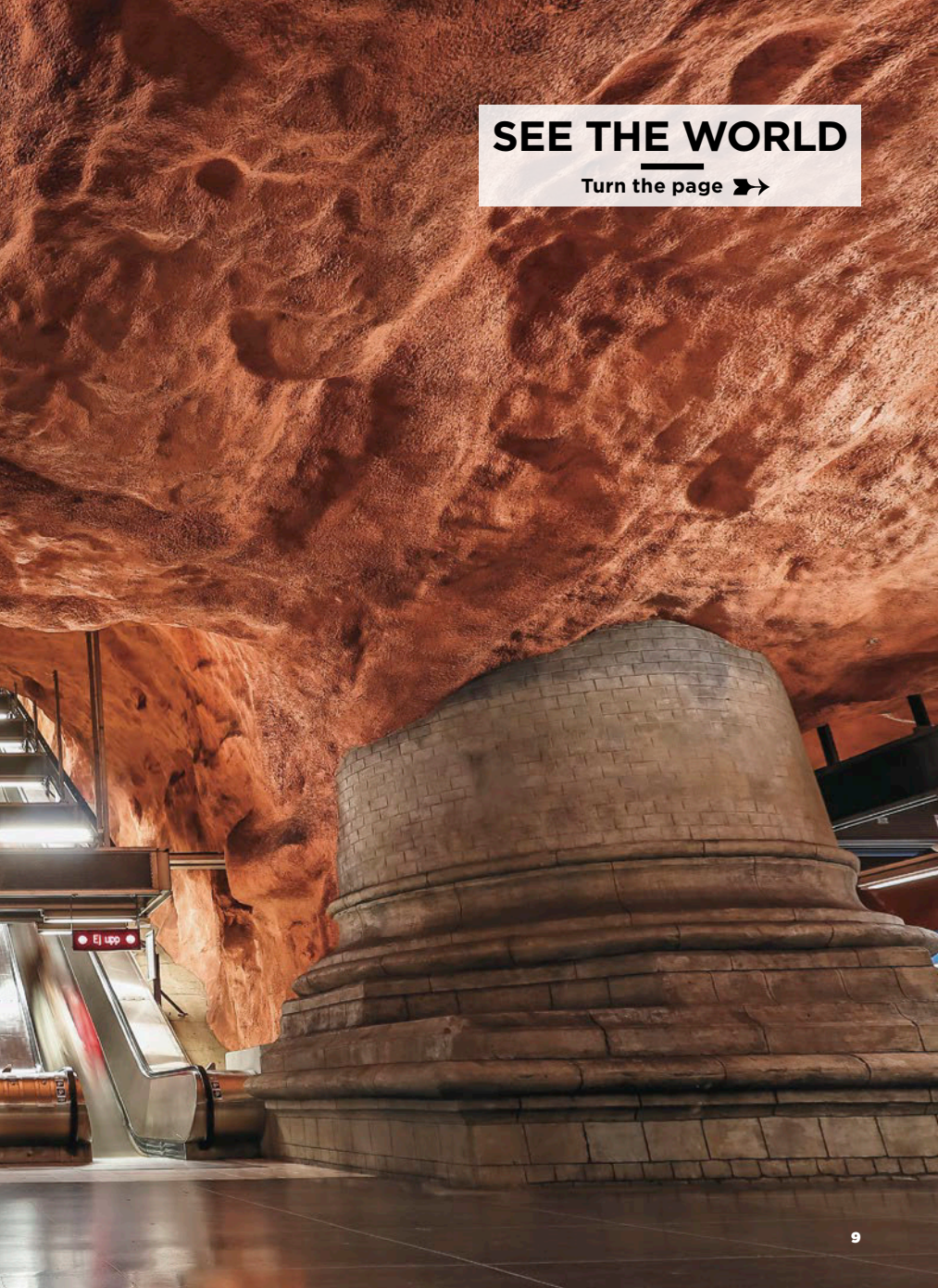


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SEE THE WORLD

Turn the page


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...DIFFERENTLY

Welcome to the world's longest art exhibit! At least, that's what Stockholm's subway system is said to be. The 14 islands that make up the Swedish capital are linked by 70 miles of underground train network. More than 90 of the 100 metro stations have been decorated with paintings, installations, sculptures, reliefs and engravings by over 150 artists. For the Rådhuset (i.e. The Court House) station on the island of Kungsholmen, artist Sigvard Olsson created an underground grotto. Opened in 1975, the station is one of several featuring what is called organic architecture.

Despite long being a sceptic, **Olly Mann** has changed his view on virtual reality—a little bit

The Future Of An Illusion



***Olly Mann is a writer, radio presenter and serial podcaster, with shows including* Answer Me This!, The Media Podcast *and* The Modern Mann**

IS VIRTUAL REALITY THE FUTURE OF TELEVISION? That's probably not a question that keeps you awake at night. But, as technology columnist for this auspicious publication, I get asked it a lot.

Last month, I would have answered with an assured and arrogant "No!" To underline my point, I might have added a dismissive wave of my palm. I would tell you that this much-hyped technology will alter the world of gaming, for sure, and perhaps also change the way viewers experience, erm, "adult" entertainment. But if you're asking me to imagine a world ten years hence, in which families slob around with individual plastic helmets on, each watching VR versions of *Mob Wives*…fuhgeddaboudit.

BUT THEN, LURED BY FREE CROISSANTS, I attended the Edinburgh International Television Festival, the shindig for Britain's TV industry, and was taken aback by how much multinational moolah is being splurged on this new dawn. As the great and the good (and the not-so-good, who make *Jeremy Kyle*) entered the conference hall, they were met with three VR displays. One was set up by YouTube: perhaps to be expected, as they're a tech company. The second was a showcase for Sky: again, not surprising, as they have a track record of investing early in developing technology. But the third display—the biggest, in fact—was hosted by the BBC.



ILLUSTRATION BY SIMON COOPER

That's right. Good old Auntie Beeb. On their stand, delegates could don an aforementioned ludicrous plastic headset (first removing their industry-standard square-rimmed spectacles) and enjoy such public-service delights as the Trooping of the Colour, a tour of the underground quarry at the Pantheon, or David Attenborough poking around a giant dinosaur's skeleton, all in glorious 360-degree vision.

This, I admit, gave me pause. If the BBC are chucking licence-fee money at capturing big-ticket events in surround vision, they are obviously anticipating that much of the general public, eventually, will watch it. So I tried it out: CNN let me have a play with their demo headset, which featured immersive footage filmed at the International Space Station, at a bullfight in Spain and amid a protest outside a courtroom.

Suddenly I didn't feel like I was merely watching a news broadcast, but rather that I was actually present at an event, liberated to look where I wished. I could turn side-to-side, up and down, and explore exotic locales as if I was really there. It was impressive.

It made me wonder, though, about the taste and decency issues this raises. Is it appropriate to film, say, the Syrian civil war, in a way that makes viewers feel like they're "part of it"? At what point might that approach tip over into voyeurism, rather than news coverage; a luxury entertainment for those of us lucky enough to not actually live in a war zone? Viewers might feel guiltier still if they understood that to capture such images the filmmakers must rig up dozens of cameras—all rather more intrusive than a typical photojournalist's kit.

EVEN IF VIEWERS are untroubled by such ethical discomfort, physical discomfort might cause other concerns. After just a few minutes with a VR headset on, my nose became squished, my eyes were straining and I felt nauseous. Hardly a premium viewing experience.

> **Is it right to film, say, the Syrian civil war, in a way that makes viewers feel like they're "part of it"?**

VR headsets also fail my Doofus Test, which goes like this: if you feel like a doofus when you wear a product, it will never go mainstream. For previous examples, see 3D TV (I don't want to put sunglasses on in my lounge, I feel like a doofus) and smartwatches (I don't want text notifications flashing on my wrist, I feel like a doofus). While donning a VR headset in a museum, art gallery or cinema feels fun, doing it at home, in front of your children, makes you feel like a doofus. It fails the Doofus Test.

But they have a favourite saying in the TV industry: "Content Is King". (It's not as popular as "Can we edit this faster?", "Pass me the drugs", or "Can we get Holly Willoughby?", but

it's right up there.) What it means is: viewers don't care what technology is used to deliver the good stuff they want to watch; they just want good stuff to watch. And the content being captured for VR is, as I discovered, really good stuff—an extra layer of detail that otherwise you'd never be able to experience.

So is VR the future of TV? I have a new answer to that question! It's this: as more of us realise we can access VR footage on Facebook and YouTube by using our smartphones, moving them around in our hands, without the need for silly headsets that make us feel like a doofus, it will become increasingly popular to explore VR on a "second screen" at the same time as watching traditional TV, or shortly afterwards—rather like re-watching DVDs with the director's commentary turned on, or seeking out a Wikipedia entry about your favourite TV show while you watch.

Bet you're glad you asked.

* * *

THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT

Most movie taglines do a good job of selling and promoting the film. Some horror flicks, however, don't even try:

Scared Stiff (1953)
"They're making a spook-tacle of themselves!"

Werewolf (1996)
"Rest in...beast"

Killer Klowns from Outer Space (1988)
"In space, no one can eat ice cream..."

Happy Birthday to Me (1981)
"John will never eat shish kebab again"

The Day of the Dolphin (1973)
"Unwittingly, he trained a dolphin to kill the President of the United States"

Miner's Massacre (2002)
"They axed for it!"

The Pit (1981)
"Down in the pit there's something alive. Half-human. Half-monster. Half-crazed. Pray to God it only kills you"

Black Christmas (2006)
"This holiday season, the slay ride begins"

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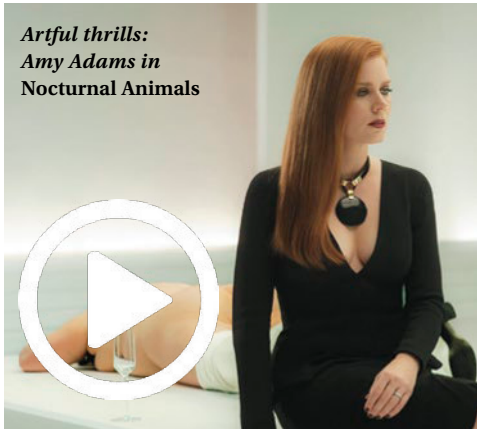
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Films

Movie of the Month

BY TOM BROWNE



Artful thrills: Amy Adams in Nocturnal Animals

THRILLER: *NOCTURNAL ANIMALS*

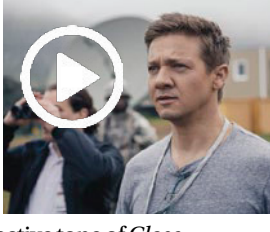
Fashion designer turned director Tom Ford made a suitably stylish debut in 2009 with *A Single Man*, but this nail-biting revenge tale is in a different league. It stars Amy Adams as Susan Morrow, a wealthy art-gallery owner who is surprised to receive the text of an unpublished novel from her ex- husband (Jake Gyllenhaal). But her surprise soon turns to horror as she starts to read it…

Nocturnal Animals should put paid to the accusations of style over substance levelled at Ford earlier in his career. Sure, the film looks sleek and polished, but the sheer ambition of the storytelling—not to mention the mounting suspense and the satirical digs at the LA art scene—makes this a contender for movie of the year.

CRIME: *AMERICAN PASTORAL* This adaptation of Philip Roth's 1997 novel marks the directorial debut of Ewan McGregor, who also takes the lead role as a businessman who's cosy life is blown apart by his daughter's radical politics. McGregor has done himself no favours by choosing such a tricky novel as a first-time project, since neither his pedestrian direction or fumbling performance does the material any favours.



SCI-FI: *ARRIVAL*



This is yet another twist on the age-old tale of alien space-craft visiting Earth for unspecified reasons—in this case nearer to the reflective tone of *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* than the gung-ho action of *Independence Day*. Jeremy Renner and Amy Adams (again) are both fantastic as scientists tasked with discovering how a series of UFOs, suspended in mid-air over several locations, managed to travel through space—and what it means for humanity.

© FOCUS FEATURES / STAGE 6 FILMS



Rosamund Pike and David Oyelowo in **A United Kingdom**

BIOPIC: *A UNITED KINGDOM*
Rosamund Pike plays Ruth Williams, a typist in 1940s London who falls in love with Seretse Khama (David Oyelowo), a royal family member in Bechuanaland (later Botswana). But will his people accept their marriage? Director Amma Asante made a big splash in 2013 with *Belle*, but this is a disappointing follow-up, spoiling a great story with clichéd scripting and broad-brush characters.

DRAMA: *A QUIET PASSION* Fans of the not-exactly-prolific film-maker Terence Davies have had a lot of cheer about recently. First there was last year's fabulous *Sunset Song*, and now comes this exquisite drama based on the life of American poet Emily Dickinson. Cynthia Nixon (right) is superb in the lead role, and the movie has an understated tone that makes it all the more powerful.

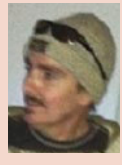


DVD of the month

COURTED*
Fabrice Luchini stars as a put-upon judge in this acclaimed French courtroom drama.



On Your Radar Steve Page, defence analyst



WATCHING: *Show Me a Hero* (HBO) Based on novel of the same name, this is about real-life racial segregation in the US city of Yonkers.

READING: *Childhood's End* by Arthur C Clarke A fascinating novel in which aliens bring peace and prosperity to Earth.

ONLINE: Wikipedia I've spent a considerable amount of time editing these articles, updating the English and British history entries in order to make the encyclopaedia less US-centric.

LISTENING: *Peer Gynt* by Grieg I'm a huge fan of classical music. "Morning Mood" never gets old.

Fancy appearing in this section? Send your current cultural favourites, along with short descriptions, to readersletters@readersdigest.co.uk

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Music

BY MANDI GOODIER

Album of the Month



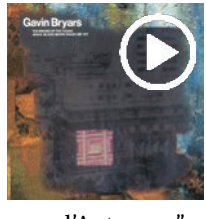
Lodestar by Shirley Collins

Shirley Collins' music has an ethereal quality—a bit like listening to the ghosts of ancestors echo over foggy dales and mysterious monoliths. She travelled to the US in 1959 to collect traditional songs, which elevated her to the status of folk legend by her return. And now—at the age of 81 after a 35-year break—she's back with an album blending numbers that date from the mid-16th century through to the 1950s.

Her voice has wizened, giving these songs an added air of authenticity and granting them the ability to transcend time: from the depths of history to present day, then—in the grand tradition of folk—on to future generations.

Key tracks: "Death and the Lady", "Cruel Lincoln", "Old Johnny Buckle"
Like this? You may also like: Alan Lomax, Ivor Cutler, Davey Graham

Overlooked Record from the Past



***The Sinking of the Titanic* by Gavin Bryars**

This hugely moving but minimalist album contains just two tracks. The first is a 24-minute reimagining of "Songe d'Automne"—played by the band onboard the *Titanic* as it sank. The composition reverberates and falls occasionally out of time, as if being submerged in the waters.

The second, meanwhile, features a delicate, looping voice (belonging to a homeless Londoner) singing "Jesus's blood never failed me yet/This one thing I know for he loves me so." Over 26 minutes, the orchestration slowly builds into one of the most affecting pieces of music of the 20th century.

On Our Radar

Remembrance in London, Nov 11–13. Marking 100 years since the Somme.

Brecon Beacons Ultra Marathon, Nov 19. A 46-mile mixed-trail run.

Dundee Mountain Film Festival, Nov 24–26. Exhibitions, speakers and award-winning films.



"This Is the Most Fun I've Ever Had"

As broadcaster and comedian **Sandi Toksvig** gears up for a new series of BBC's *QI*, she talks to **Tom Browne** about comedy, politics—and the surprising joys of Angel Delight



DOWN A SMALL SIDE STREET in London's Covent Garden, *QI* headquarters is everything you expect it to be: cosy, welcoming and brimming with knowledge. As I settle into a comfy sofa, I notice that the walls are lined with books containing facts and trivia (including, I'm pleased to report, the *Reader's Digest Library of Modern Knowledge*). It's like someone has tried to cram all the world's wisdom into a single room.

After a few moments Sandi Toksvig comes bustling in, chatting to the staff about potential lunch venues, and we immediately fall into a discussion about favourite restaurants. There's a refreshing lack of formality about Sandi, and her conversation is full of anecdotes and amusing asides (when I remark on her Fitbit exercise tracker, she replies, "I'm going to invent something called a Witbit—every 100 steps you get a laugh").

This, of course, makes her the perfect new host of *QI*, the BBC's addictive general-knowledge quiz, which is back on our screens this month. Sandi has previously taken over from the late Simon Hoggart on Radio 4's *The News Quiz* and from William G Stewart on Channel 4's *15 to 1*, and charmingly describes herself as "the takeover queen".

Was this good preparation for stepping into Stephen Fry's shoes after 13 years?

"I don't know, darling," she says, using a term of endearment that comes very naturally. "You can't worry about what's gone before. It's not like the BBC are now paying by the inch, so they got a shorter host. You can only be yourself."

There's no doubt, however, that Sandi feels entirely at home in the *QI* universe. "This is the most fun I've ever had," she says, grinning broadly. "It's like somebody crafted a show featuring all the things I've been working towards. I've hosted lots of things, I've been a guest on lots of things, I like arcane knowledge, I like doing fast banter, and somebody decided to put it all in one show for me. Very kind of them."

SANDI CERTAINLY GIVES the polymathic Stephen Fry a run for his money, and she has a similar bubbling enthusiasm. Her musical selections in a recent episode of *Desert Island Discs* were described as "chock-full of joy", and she's confessed in the past to not understanding the concept of boredom.

"Look at this room, darling, look at this room!" she exclaims when I raise the subject. "Have you read all these books? How could anybody get bored



Sandi with **QI** *regular Alan Davies. "I'm totally in love with him—I'd definitely turn for him"*

when all this is available? Then there are the people I haven't met, the places I haven't been, the food I haven't tried. I was in the greengrocers earlier and they had these little miniature pears called bambinella. They're like pears but baby ones, like doll's house pears. They're absolutely delicious and I'd never even heard of them."

It's easy to be seduced by Sandi's good humour and sense of fun, but it goes hand-in-hand with an intensely serious side. Having originally studied to be a human-rights lawyer, she's the patron of several charities and has campaigned for numerous issues down the years, culminating in the setting up of the Women's Equality Party last year with journalist Catherine Mayer.

"Every year I host a concert at the Royal Festival Hall on International Women's Day," she says, discussing



Sandi with Debbie, her wife since 2014

the origins of the party. "On this occasion, I was giving a lecture on one of the suffragettes and there was a big picture of her looking down on me. As I looked up, I suddenly thought, *Oh, the job's not done. You'd be ashamed of me*. I feel that really strongly. Forty-six years after the Equal Pay Act, we still don't have equal pay. The representation of women in the Brexit debate—whatever side you were on—was a disgrace. It was a conversation between white men, debating what was going to happen. And then, the minute it happened, the white men in charge ran away and left the woman in charge!"

Branding the level of debate within the two main parties "childish and disgraceful", it's clear that Sandi wants a more imaginative, engaged and consensual politics.

"The House of Commons itself is a very interesting metaphor at the moment. The building is riddled with rot and asbestos and needs closing down. It would be very interesting if the move was made into a round chamber, so things were no longer entirely oppositional and partisan. I'd like us to look at many more disparate views, rather than this constant 'me against you.'

"Denmark is a good example," she continues, harking back to her county of birth. "We have a long history of coalition politics, and I think it brings forward more reasoned debate. I'd love a politician in this country to say, 'The person on the opposition bench makes a very good point.' Why not say that? Why not have a moment of co-operation?"

The Women's Equality Party has made the running on this by urging other political parties to steal its policies and incorporate them into their own manifestos.

"Absolutely, help yourself," says Sandi, smiling again. "Jeremy Corbyn has started talking about the gender

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pay gap, and we've also challenged Theresa May to do something about it in her first 100 days in office. So crack on."

OF COURSE, the issue of gender is just as relevant in broadcasting and particularly the male dominance of TV panel shows, with which Sandi is all too familiar.

"It's a tough game," she agrees. "It's testosterone-fuelled and combative, and you have to be a particular kind of woman to stand up to it. It makes a lot of them feel anxious. Women generally have a different style. If there's somebody telling a joke at a dinner party, it'll nearly always be a bloke. Woman don't tend to occupy those places socially.

"You have to remember that the training for stand-up comedy is late-night clubs in front of drunks, and most women would frankly rather be at home. In the early years I'd be stood on stage and immediately some bloke would shout, 'Show us your tits!' When I did [Channel 4 comedy-improv show] *Who's Line Is It Anyway?*, you'd ask the audience to shout out an unusual occupation and always, without fail, some guy would shout back, 'Gynaecologist!' and think it was really hilarious. You need to be a certain sort of woman to come through that."

Sandi's own life experiences have given her a thick skin too. Married to psychotherapist Debbie and with three children in their twenties, her current life is a model of happiness—so it's easy to forget that she feared for her career when she came out as gay

> "THE TRAINING FOR STAND-UP COMEDY IS LATE-NIGHT CLUBS IN FRONT OF DRUNKS. MOST WOMEN WOULD RATHER BE AT HOME"



Sandi has been a regular on the comedy circuit. "You need to be a certain sort of woman to come through that"

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in 1994. Now that same-sex couples are able to get married, does she thing that society is more tolerant?

"Yes and no. One of the wonderful things about being in the public eye is that people feel as if they know me, so they will confide in me very quickly or write to me. So I'm totally aware of the continuing existence of huge amounts of homophobia. It'd be nice to say, 'Got married, job done, love triumphs,' but there are people who have real issues within their family or in their workplace, and homophobic bullying in schools is still a real problem. But it's much better now, no question. I get far fewer death threats than I used to."

I ask her how serious these death threats were, which immediately prompts speculation as to what an "unserious death threat" might sound like. "Probably something like, 'I'm going to kill you, but I'm going to do it with blancmange,' " suggests Sandi, laughing uproariously. "Death by blancmange—I like that. Nobody has blancmange any more."

Amusingly, this segues straight into a chat about the joys of old-fashioned puddings. "Do you know that you can make Angel Delight explode," says Sandi with glee, as we're wrapping up. "It's brilliant fun, but maybe do it in the garden. Get some Angel Delight and a tea-light. Light the tea-light, stand on a chair and sprinkle the Angel Delight from above. Boom!"

A chat with Sandi Toksvig, it seems, has something for everyone.

The new series of *QI* starts on BBC2 this month. You can read more extracts from this interview at readersdigest.co.uk/entertainment

* * *

HOLD THE FRONT PAGE!

The Argus is a newspaper covering Brighton and Hove and—like any local paper worth its salt—it has some cracking headlines:







SOURCE: BUZZFEED.COM

Alfred Molina, 63, has starred in numerous stage and screen productions, including *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and the Broadway hit *Art*. He's currently appearing in Stephen Poliakoff's BBC drama *Close to the Enemy*.

Alfred Molina "I Remember"

...MY FIRST ACTING EXPERIENCE. I was at St Mary's Catholic Primary School in Kensal Rise and I was one of the shepherds—complete with tea-towel headdress and crêpe-paper beard. When the Angel Gabriel—a vision of cardboard and feathers—appeared, I fell to my knees gasping with awe. I was so into it that Sister Mary Kenneth, the show's director, eventually had to silence me with a finger raised to her lips.

Another kid might have been discouraged, but my intention to become an actor started there at the age of five, and by nine I was declaring it daily.

...MY MUM GIOVANNA'S GREAT DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION. She was Italian and life in our family revolved around food, love and guilt. She was operatic in so many things—the way she cooked and especially the way she showered me with love. She was constantly kissing, hugging and squeezing me and others. I loved it, of course—except when I was a teenager, when it became a bit embarrassing. But I inherited the same tendency to show love.

...MY DAD ESTEBAN WAS SPANISH. He came to England as a refugee from the Civil War and joined the

© TINSELTOWN/SHUTTERSTOCK



Alfred Molina at the premiere of **Sister Cities** *earlier this year*





Alfred at five years old; (right) his Italian mother arrived in the UK in the 1940s

British army's pioneer corps. My mother lived through the Second World War in Italy and immigrated shortly after. I grew up speaking three languages that I still use today, with varying degrees of competence.

...IT WAS A DOUBLE LIFE. On the one hand I was surrounded by so many Latin influences—the emotional expressiveness, the food, the music. But they were tempered by the other part of me that was quite reserved and English. As a kid I didn't want to stand out in the crowd, but the truth was that my life at home was different to my friends' lives and I think they were quite intrigued by that.

...MY FIRST COMMUNION. All the other kids in my class were dressed in shorts and blazers, but in Italy and Spain a sailor suit is traditional, so my mum had one made for me and shipped over. I was tall for a seven-year-old and there's a picture of me standing head-and-shoulders above these cool West Indian and Irish kids, dressed in a sailor suit...like something out of *Anchors Aweigh*! No wonder I became an actor.

...MY PARENTS SEPARATED WHEN I WAS 13. It was difficult because I stayed with my mum and my brother went with my dad—something that would never happen today. But it was the Sixties and people didn't think so much about the welfare of children. So I spent a great deal of time on my own in my teens and I retreated into my imagination, where I could be anybody. I became an actor in my head, playing to an audience of one.

...THERE WAS NO HINT OF THE ARTISTIC GENE IN MY FAMILY. My mother, massaging English in the way that she always did, used to claim I was artistic because her own father was "a sculptor". It turned out that, actually, he was a stone mason!

PERSONAL PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALFRED MOLINA

> ***My father considered actors to be homosexuals and drug addicts—he thought it wasn't a career for a bloke***

...MY FATHER DIDN'T GET MY DESIRE TO BE AN ACTOR. He worked in catering—as a waiter, bartender and restaurant manager—and for him it was all about paying your bills and providing for your family, like a real man. He considered actors to be homosexuals and drug addicts—he thought it wasn't a career for a bloke. I filled in as a waiter myself after the Guildhall [School of Music and Drama] and was even offered the chance to train as an assistant manager. When I told my dad I'd turned it down in favour of a small part in a fringe play, he gave me the kind of look that he reserved for the lost and the mad.

...I REGRET FALLING OUT WITH MY DAD TOWARDS THE END OF HIS LIFE. He'd remarried and, after his death, his second wife showed me a huge suitcase full of photos and clippings and copies of reviews of everything that I'd been in. It was upsetting because I'd never known he was proud of me and I'd have loved to have had a conversation with him.

...MY MUM CAME TO SEE EVERYTHING I WAS EVER IN. And, boy, did she see me in some s***! But she would always turn up in her best fake fur coat and pearls. She would come backstage and say, "Freddo—that's the best thing you ever did." I learned from her that when one of your kids is trying their hardest, it's not the best time to offer them the benefit of your critique.

...MY MUM DIED AT THE AGE OF 56. She was overweight and she smoked and drank and never exercised. For the last ten years of her life she reeled from one illness to the other. I think she'd never got over the divorce and carried on loving my dad until the day she died. Sadly, I wasn't at her bedside, but apparently she left the earth telling a joke that she didn't finish. So right at the end her timing was really bad.

...MY GREATEST MENTOR WAS MY ENGLISH AND DRAMA TEACHER. Martyn Corbett encouraged me from my first day at Cardinal Manning Secondary School for Boys in North Kensington. He ran the Wednesday after-school drama club, which I basically lived for.

He cast me in many productions and helped me prepare my audition pieces for both the National Youth Theatre and the Guildhall. When nerves got the better of me at the latter and I was turned down, he



Alfred with his daughter Rachel, who was born in 1980

even wrote to the board and they gave me another chance. So I owe him everything.

...BEING A STUDENT AT THE GUILDHALL. Everything in my life seemed to make sense the moment I walked through that door. I was never an academic high-flyer and I spent years just treading water, waiting until I was old enough to go to drama school. It was a relief to be somewhere that suddenly felt right.

...MARTYN AND I REMAINED PALS UNTIL HE DIED A FEW YEARS AGO. He came to see me when I was in *Art* on Broadway (for which I was nominated for a Tony award) and afterwards we went out for dinner with one of my friends, who asked him if I'd always been a good actor. I sat back expecting a eulogy and Martyn said, "No, he was a terrible actor! But a wonderful show-off." I guess he just saw something in me.

...BECOMING A TEACHER MYSELF A FEW YEARS AGO. Being asked to work with students at places such as UCLA in California and Juilliard in New York is a total privilege. The young students' passion reminds me of why I wanted to be an actor in the first place and, despite the cliché, you learn as much from them as they ever do from you.

...STEVEN SPIELBERG SAVED MY BACON. It was 1980 and my daughter Rachel was about to be born. We were broke. I was working in a play at The Theatre Royal Stratford East, earning nothing. Then, suddenly, I was offered a two-week stint playing Satipo, one of Indiana Jones's dodgy Peruvian guides, on *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, for which I received an huge amount of money.

Not only did it introduce me to the world of film-making and provide me with some real professional kudos, financially it was a gift from heaven. We were able to buy cots and nappies and prams and all the stuff we needed for our baby.

...BEING ABLE TO THANK STEVEN PERSONALLY. I bumped into him a couple of years ago at a big awards do. I was there to present a gong to Tom Stoppard. I was waiting in the wings and in front of me was a guy looking at a piece of paper and muttering to himself, practising his speech. I saw it was Steven. I tapped him on the shoulder and said. "Hi! Alfred...remember me? I may never get this opportunity again, but I wanted to thank you personally for *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. You saved my arse!"

He said, "I had no idea! That's fantastic. So glad I could help."

...MY FIRST PLAY IN NEW YORK. It was an off-Broadway production of Brian Friel's *Molly Sweeney,* which won an award for being the outstanding play of the 1996 season. For me, the highlight was working with Jason Robards, who had always been a hero of mine and became like the uncle of my dreams. He was such a warm and welcoming guy, and I called him "Guvnor".

We talked once about the British honours system and he was intrigued. I said if you'd been British they'd have given you a knighthood. He said, "Yeah. Sir Jason Robards. I like that!"

...BECOMING A FATHER AND GRANDFATHER HAS BEEN A PURE JOY. I don't think I'd win any prizes as the greatest dad on earth and I wish I'd been there more, but some of the happiest moments of my life have revolved around Rachel, from the moment I first held her in her arms to now. I take a lot of pride in her achievements as a photographer and as a mother to my grandchildren, Layla, 12, and Alfie, nine—named after me. I'm besotted by them both.



With wife Jill Gascoine, pictured in 2012, before the onset of her dementia

...MY RELATIONSHIP WITH RACHEL'S LOVELY MUM DIDN'T WORK OUT, ROMANTICALLY. We were young and we'd only been together for a couple of years when we became parents, but we were both determined to be involved in raising our daughter and we've remained good friends.

© PETER BROOKER/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

...MEETING JILL GASCOINE, MY WIFE. We were starring together in the West End musical *Destry Rides Again* in 1982, and it was a *coup de foudre*. There was a big age gap (Jill was 16 years older than me), which seemed to matter to the press but not to us. We fell in love and Jill remained my anchor and the better part of me until she was diagnosed with dementia a few years ago.

...AS A FAMILY WE FOUND IT HARD TO COPE WITH JILL'S CONDITION. But all of us, including her sons—my stepsons—have made our peace with it now. Jill is in a home in LA and being well looked after and, because she's now passed the stage of railing against what's happening to her, she seems somehow at peace in her own twilight world. The sadness for us revolves around the loss of someone who was so funny and wise and philosophical about life.

Jill was the beating heart of our family. But we've all supported each other, and her sons—who have lost the mother they admired and loved so much—amaze me every day with the way they deal with it.

...THE MOMENT I KNEW THAT I'D ARRIVED. And it wasn't at an awards ceremony or on a red carpet. It was one morning, a few years ago, sitting in my garden in Los Angeles with an hour to kill before leaving for a foreign film location. I was watching the sun come up, drinking a cup of tea, going through a checklist in my mind—passport, script, ticket. And I remember thinking, *This is great. I'm doing exactly what I wanted to do—earning my living from the one thing I've loved all my life.* Those small moments are sometimes the best.

As told to Daphne Lockyer

***Close to the Enemy*, starring Alfred Molina, is starting on BBC2 this month.**

* * *

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Margareta Nordell was fortunate to take part in a trial of a new therapy

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERIKA GERDEMARK

Trials of non-invasive, painless treatments to beat this disease are showing excellent results

New Ways to Beat Breast Cancer

BY LISA FITTERMAN

ON A COLD JANUARY DAY IN 2011, Margareta Nordell bundled up in her winter coat, hugged her dog Jackie goodbye and went off to have a mammogram—just as she had every 24 months for the past 20 years. A customer representative for a Stockholm insurance company (now retired), she wasn't worried. Never before had a suspicious lump or shadow been found and she assumed this time would be no different. She was wrong. When the X-rays were processed, her doctor pointed to a dot on her right breast. It looked like a speck of dust or something smaller, even.

"But I can't feel it when I check," Margareta protested.

"That's a good thing," her doctor replied. "If it's cancer, we've probably caught it in time, before it grows into something you *can* feel."

A biopsy proved it was malignant. All of a sudden Margareta, then 66, an independent mother and grandmother, found herself thrust into a vast club she would much rather not be part of: women with breast cancer. An estimated one in every eight women round the world will develop the disease in their lifetime.

Margareta didn't even consider a lumpectomy: early in the treatment, her doctor asked if she would like to be part of a local trial into a procedure called "preferential radiofrequency ablation", or PRFA, which is based on the principle that cancer cells can be killed by heating them up. Her age—and the tiny size of the tumour—fitted the trial's criteria; while there was no guarantee it would work, there would be no cutting into her breast and zero recovery time. She would be given a local anesthetic and the whole thing would last about 20 minutes.

It sounded exciting, like science fiction. Margareta would still undergo minor surgery to remove the dead tissue a few weeks after having the procedure so scientists could examine it, have radiation to ensure the cancer was gone for good and be prescribed a drug called tamoxifen to prevent it recurring. But she knew she would be helping women diagnosed in the future perhaps avoid the operating table altogether.

"Absolutely, I'll do it," she said.

PRFA IS ONE OF A NUMBER of new breast-cancer treatments being tested on patients right now. They represent a radical departure from the standard "one size fits all" medical approach: cut off a whole breast or at least excise part of it, then radiate, then, if the tumour was really aggressive, use chemotherapy—making the overall treatment a trifecta for side effects

like nausea, hair loss and brain fog.

As recently as 50 years ago, scientists thought most tumours were alike and there were few treatment options outside of surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy. Around one in four people survived cancer, compared to half today. In the 1970s, in the first glimmer of exciting changes to come, doctors began to test new treatments such as the "precision" drug trastuzumab, a laboratory-produced antibody treatment better known by its brand name Herceptin, which can stop cancer cells from growing.

Thanks to advances in genetic testing, we now know even more about breast cancer. A landmark 2012 study undertaken by scientists at Cancer Research UK's Cambridge Institute, for example, proved that the disease can be divided into ten different sub-groups, each of which may respond to different combinations of drugs, non-invasive treatments, surgery or, in the case of tumours that grow really slowly, no treatment at all.

We know about gene mutations, both acquired and inherited, and the possible effects of hormonal levels and smoking on cancer. At this stage, there's also evidence that alcohol consumption, excess weight and a lack of exercise increases this risk of developing breast cancer.

"We're continuing to develop methods to detect tumours earlier, and to find new telltale markers in order to help doctors better tailor treatment," says Dr Áine McCarthy, the organisation's senior science information officer. When doctors know what they're dealing with, be it an ER positive tumour (which grows in response to female hormones) or a HER2 positive tumour (one which has large amounts of the human epidermal growth factor receptor 2 protein on the surface of the cancer cells) it makes all the difference in helping doctors develop a treatment plan.

> **"Alcohol consumption, excess weight and a lack of exercise all increase the risk of breast cancer**

Even more recently, an international study published last spring in *Nature* examined in detail the genomes in 560 breast cancers, sifting through billions of letters of code to find the mutations in each case. This research, led by the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute in Cambridge, isn't a new cure, but it represents a leap towards treatment that's tailored for each patient.

"All cancers are due to mutations that occur in all of us in the DNA of our cells during the course of our lifetimes," said director of the Institute and professor Sir Mike Stratton. "This



Margareta has been cancer-free for five years

study brings us much closer to a complete description of the changes in DNA in breast cancer and thus to a comprehensive understanding of the causes of the disease and the opportunities for new treatments."

Patient, heal thyself

The immune system is a mysterious thing that can swoop in to heal your common cold and cause autoimmune conditions such as arthritis and type-I diabetes. Researchers such as Dr Pam Ohashi, director of the tumour immunotherapy programme at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre in Toronto, are now trying to harness its power to combat breast cancer. The idea is to stimulate one's own immune system to work harder and attack cancer cells.

"There are these molecules called 'checkpoint inhibitors', which act as stop signals and regulate the immune system," explains Dr Ohashi. Clinical trials in certain types of cancer that naturally induce a strong immune response—such as melanoma—have tested drugs that block these negative signals, and the results have shown that releases the body's T cells, the foot soldiers of the immune system, to go and fight tumours.

"We're trying to see if the same principle works with breast cancer," Dr Ohashi says. Patients in clinical

trials are getting immune therapy as a last resort after proven treatments haven't worked.

Once scientists have figured out how to make the immune system work better, immune therapy may be given to breast-cancer patients early on, thus allowing them to skip chemotherapy and/or radiation.

"Combined with other strategies, it has the potential to cure cancer," says Dr Ohashi. "That could be ten years down the road, but the time has now come to think of it as a reality."

Cooling things down

The idea is simple: cool a tumour and the surrounding tissue to the point that the cells within freeze, let the cells burst their cell boundaries or "pop" like a full can of frozen soft drink, and after the malignant ones rupture they're harmlessly reabsorbed into the tissue. An Israeli invention, the IceSense3 machine, which requires a needle to be inserted into the breast tumour, is being tested in patient trials across 20 sites in the US and also in Japan, Europe and Hong Kong.

Already successful in kidney, liver and lung-cancer treatments, the procedure, which is limited to women aged 65 and over with breast tumours that are no more than one-and-a-half centimetres in diameter, takes up to a half an hour and requires only a local anesthetic.

"You turn the machine on once the needle is placed and it gets cold in about 20 seconds," says Will Irby, a vice-president at the Memphis-based IceCure Medical Inc. "The tumour is frozen from the inside out and you can watch the ice ball being formed with the help of an ultrasound."

Dr Richard Fine, the director of education and research at Margaret West Comprehensive Breast Centre in Memphis, notes the procedure is non-surgical—and indeed its goal is to replace the surgical treatment of the breast cancer.

"The patient will still feel a lump for about six months, as the dead cells are being reabsorbed and the changes caused by the cryo-ablation are being resolved," he says. "After that we do a mammogram where we can see normal breast tissue surrounded by a white outline, which surrounds the zone of treatment."

For New Jersey resident Muriel Smith, having the procedure in February was "a piece of cake"—so easy, in fact, she hopped off the table at the medical centre, donned her shirt and went off to a lunch date. Diagnosed in December last year, she opted for cryo-ablation over surgery because the latter required so much more effort *and* someone would have had to pick her up afterwards.

"At my age, I'm not crazy about going under anesthesia," says the 79-year-old. "I was able to watch everything on the screen. Forty-seven days after diagnosis, I was free of cancer."

Heatings things up

For preferential radiofrequency ablation, or PRFA—the procedure Margareta Nordell had—the doctor first carefully guides a needle into the tumour with the help of an ultrasound machine and then secures it in place using mechanical micropulses. Cancer cells trying to escape through the tumour's blood vessels are quickly killed off by the electric pulses in a process called anti-seeding.

Once positioned correctly, an electric current is conducted through the tissue via the needle, resulting in mechanical friction, which heats the cells up and kills or damages them depending on the temperature—when these cells do scatter, they don't grow, and therefore they can do no damage, says Hans Wiksell, a professor emeritus at Stockholm's Karolinska Institutet who built the PRFA machine. The electrode-needle brings the central body of the tumour to 70C, which quickly kills all the cells within, while the temperature in the zone immediately outside of the tumour is ideally 43C, where non-cancerous cells can repair the damage but cancerous ones will not.

"The wonderful thing is that the precision and control involved create a totally different mechanism to treat breast cancer," explains Professor Wiksell. "You can get cancer from chemotherapy and radiation—nuclear bombs can cause cancer but heat can't."

So far, the current trial has tested the procedure on 18 older patients, including Margareta, with tumours that are no more than two centimetres in depth, and has boasted a high success rate, where participants have not seen regressions. The trial is limited because older patients tend to have tumours that aren't as virulent and fast-spreading as those seen in younger ones.

As for Margareta, she was a bit startled by all the people, computers and other machines in the operating room. Then she closed her eyes and didn't feel anything at all; barely 20 minutes later, it was all over.

Now cancer-free for five years, she says, "I'm very lucky and grateful that I could be in this trial. I can be there for my daughter, my three grandchildren and Jackie, my Jack Russell terrier. I can keep on living."

* * *

PERSONAL TREASURE TROVE

Did you know that your body contains roughly 0.2 milligrams of gold, most of which is in your blood? That means that if you wanted to make an eight-gram sovereign, you'd need to join forces with about 40,000 people.

SOURCE: TELEGRAPH.CO.UK

it all adds up

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9 Ways To Cut Back On Booze

BY SUSANNAH HICKLING



Susannah is twice winner of the Guild of Health Writers Best Consumer Magazine Health Feature

1. **MEET FRIENDS FOR A COFFEE, NOT A DRINK.** If your aim is a good chat in a relaxed environment, find a nice cafe. That way, you'll keep alcohol out of the equation. That can only be a good thing considering it has a part to play in some 60 medical conditions, including cancer and depression.

2. **ALWAYS HAVE TWO GLASSES ON THE GO:** one of wine and one of water. Use water, not alcohol, to quench your thirst and sip on the alcohol for the flavour.

3. **KEEP THE WINE BOTTLE OFF THE DINNER TABLE.** It's just too easy to keep pouring until you've drained the bottle. Instead, keep a jug of water on the table, then pour one glass of wine, cork the bottle and put it away.

4. **FIND AN ALTERNATIVE TO YOUR FAVOURITE TIPPLE.** Non-alcoholic of course. What about an iced tea or a fizzy elderflower pressé? Or it could be a walk, or a hot bath. Do it for two weeks until it becomes your new habit.

5. **WORK OUT HOW MUCH MONEY YOU'RE SPENDING ON BOOZE EACH WEEK.** Nothing will be more sobering! And once you know, commit to spending half that amount and save the rest for something special.



6 MAKE A LIST OF RULES. For instance, drink only at weekends; no more than one drink a day; drink only wine spritzers; drink only when you're dressed in your best clothes, and so on. Post the list near the fridge or drinks cabinet.

7 DON'T DRINK ALONE. Not because it's sad—there are plenty of times when a glass of wine by yourself is very nice and totally appropriate—but for the discipline. It's too easy to start drinking excessively if you drink on your own.

8 TELL EVERYONE YOU'RE CUTTING BACK. The hope is this will prevent people from urging you to have "just one" or "just one more".

9 HAVE A NO-VEMBER. You've heard of Dry January, but why wait? There's evidence that giving up booze for a month can help you lose weight, sleep better and lower blood glucose levels (a risk factor for diabetes) and cholesterol. But it's important to use it to cut down on your drinking overall—it's no good going on a binge at the end of the month!

© CREATISTA/SHUTTERSTOCK

HOT FOODS FOR COLD-WEATHER COMFORT



CHILLI PEPPERS
A good chilli will certainly warm you up—plus it suppresses high-calorie cravings, which could help you lose weight, according to one large meta-analysis. So spice up your life!



OATS
What could be more warming than a bowl of porridge? It keeps you feeling full until lunchtime and is jam-packed with soluble fibre that's linked to a healthy heart. Research has found that just over two servings each day may help reduce total cholesterol by about two per cent.



CINNAMON
An extra sprinkle of this spice on carb-heavy treats may help minimise blood-sugar spikes. Research on healthy individuals found that adding six grams to a pudding may help prolong satiety and improve glycaemic control. Try incorporating it in apple crumble.

More Sex Please, We're Women

We know plenty about men and their desires, but surprisingly little research has been done on female sexuality. Here's what we know:

What's a normal sex drive for women?

There's no normal, according to Iris Krasnow, the American author of *Sex After...* who interviewed women aged between 20–90 about how sex and intimacy change throughout life. She spoke to women in satisfied, committed relationships who weren't having sex—and that was normal for them—to women in their seventies and eighties who were "as giddy as teenagers".

Is desire the first step?

Apparently not. Research suggests that women's sexual desire may not be spontaneous but comes after the encounter begins. That doesn't mean they have lacklustre libido, just that it takes the right context or trigger—wanting to be close, for example—for them to connect with their bodies.



© MJTH/SHUTTERSTOCK

What causes low libido after menopause?

Studies confirm that menopause doesn't affect desire, though pretty much everything else does, including medication (especially anti-seizure drugs, antidepressants and heart pills), low mood, resentment towards your partner and long working hours. But tiredness and stress come top of the list. Sometimes physical issues linked to the menopause, such as discomfort or dryness, play a part too.

So what's a girl to do?

First get more sleep. A US study found that women who have an extra hour of sleep are 14 per cent more likely to have sex the next day. And why not try mindfulness meditation? Research found that mindfulness-based group therapy significantly improved sexual desire in women. Keep things fresh—go to a hotel for a change—and make sure you make time for intimacy.

Game On!

Are video games mindless? Far from it. The signs are they have mental-health benefits.

CRUSH CRAVINGS WITH CANDY CRUSH SAGA

Playing a pattern-matching game will help preoccupy the visual imagination part of your brain, so you can't picture what you think you want—a cigarette, for example—reducing cravings by 25 per cent.

TACKLE TRAUMA WITH TETRIS

According to studies from Oxford University, playing the visually-absorbing Tetris within a few hours of a traumatic event can help prevent flashbacks, the most painful and hard-to-treat symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder.

GET CALM WITH ANGRY BIRDS

"Games that require a lot of instant participation create the same blood-flow patterns in your brain as meditation," says author of *SuperBetter* Dr Jane McGonigal. So playing Angry Birds after a stressful meeting really is helping you relax.

POKÉMON GO, DEPRESSION GONE?

This popular game may help people conquer depression, possibly by getting players out of the house and focusing on something different.

© DRAGON IMAGES/SHUTTERSTOCK

MEN'S HEALTH

FIVE FACTS ABOUT MOUTH CANCER

1. Oral cancer is twice as common in men as in women.

2. It causes more deaths per number of cases than breast cancer, cervical cancer or melanoma (a form of skin cancer).

3. People who smoke and drink are 30 times more likely to develop mouth cancer. Smoking is the biggest risk factor, so don't touch tobacco and always drink alcohol in moderation.

4. Experts think that Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) transmitted by oral sex could soon emerge as the biggest risk factor.

5. Looking after your teeth can cut your risk. Brush and floss, do frequent self-examinations and make sure you see your dentist regularly. He or she will examine your mouth as well as your teeth. And don't ignore that ulcer that doesn't heal, or any lumps or red and white patches in your mouth—make a dental appointment without delay.



Concerned About Care-Home Fees?

When it comes to care-home fees, and how they're funded, there's a lot of misinformation out there. The rules are relatively complex and they changed last year with the implementation of the Care Act. A planned cap on care fees has been postponed and won't be considered until at least 2020. Knowing how you could be affected, and the steps you



could take to protect your home and savings, could make a big difference to the inheritance you pass to your loved ones.

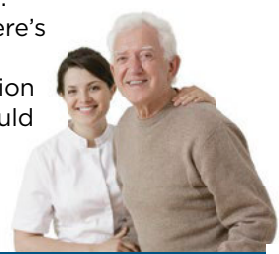
It's a common misconception that when a couple live together and one requires residential care, the home could be sold and one of the couple left homeless. This isn't the case. There are some circumstances where the home is safe from care fees—one being when it's occupied by a spouse/partner.

That's where the good news ends. If you have to go into care you may be "means tested" by your Local Authority to assess your ability to pay for that care. Under current rules, if you have assets that total more than £23,250 (in England), which would include the value of your home unless it is subject to a disregard like the one referred to above, you will be required to fund your care in full. A care home will cost £25,000–£40,000 a year or more depending on where you live. Research suggests one in ten people will suffer care costs of at least £100,000 (Dilnot Commission 2010).

> *"We've worked hard all our lives to leave something for our children and grandchildren. Why should the Local Authority get it all?*

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU CAN DO TO PROTECT YOUR ASSETS?

Yes, possibly. However, there's no "one size fits all" solution and you should take advice from a specialist.



Take the first step by requesting your free information pack from Reader's Digest Legal—call 0800 031 9516 and quote reference RD17.

Reader's Digest Legal is a service provided by Collective Legal Solutions, part of the Co-op Group

Doing A Dance For The NHS

BY MAX PEMBERTON



Max is a hospital doctor, author and newspaper columnist

DOCTORS AREN'T RENOWNED FOR THEIR GRACE, particularly when it comes to dancing. More funky chicken than Fontayne. But there's something at which we excel—a rare piece of choreography, beautifully executed night and day in a hospital near you: the Doctor's Dance.

It's the result of a collaboration between doctor and cleaner. Those of you hoping to catch this wonder are most likely to do so late at night in the A&E department, preferably on a Friday. This is when cleaners are out in force and doctors are at their most stressed. The result would put Nureyev to shame.

Cleaners in hospitals tend to be concrete in their thinking: the floor needs to be mopped so it will get mopped, even if people are standing on it. Doctors write up their notes after seeing patients, standing at desks that are too high to sit at but too low to stand at comfortably and write on. Then the cleaners come. Everyone who can vacates the area, but that rarely includes the doctor, who has a mounting list of patents and isn't gong to be delayed by housekeeping.

FIRST, THE CLEANERS MOP ROUND THE DOCTOR'S SHOES. Then they gently nudge them with their mops. Then they start battering them, and the doctor is forced to perform the Doctor's Dance as they hop from one foot to the next while the frustrated cleaner tries to clean under their feet. All this is in complete silence. It reaches truly balletic proportions when the cleaner tries to push the mop between the doctor's legs in



ILLUSTRATION BY BRIAN TAYLOR

order to clean under the desk where the doctor is standing.

It was during one of these incidents that I met Saidi. He's a cleaner and had just soaked one of my shoes. As I was wringing disinfectant from my sock, Saidi turned to me and said, out of the blue, "It's great to work here."

I was taken aback. He was cleaning up other people's dirt and I'd just been threatened with a knife by a patient. *What's great about that?* I wondered. He introduced himself and explained that he came from Ethiopia.

"I've been here four years now and it's a privilege to work in the NHS."

I stared at him. Privilege? Not the word I'd have chosen at 2am.

"There's nothing like this where I come from. We're so lucky here."

The part of me that had made me want to be a doctor in the first place began to wake. The NHS *is* amazing. There are lots of things that are wrong and don't work, but it's a fantastically British institution, based on a heartfelt idea of equality.

A nurse standing at the computer pipes up: she was born in the US, but came to the UK six years ago to work in the NHS. "Healthcare in the US is a disgrace. It's fine if you've got money, but if you don't have insurance it's worse than the third world."

FOR A FEW BRIEF MOMENTS, three people representing three continents marvelled at the NHS. We've become a bit complacent about it, particularly those who were born knowing nothing else. But every so often, I think we should remember how lucky we are.

Perhaps we should even do a little dance.

MEDICAL MYTHS—BUSTED!

Twins Skip A Generation



WHERE DID THE MYTH COME FROM?

There's a lot of confusion around twins and the different types, so it's no surprise that there are myths around twins too. First, it's important to understand the two types of twins. Usually just one egg is released by the ovaries each month, but if two are released and fertilised, non-identical twins occur. These twins therefore come from two eggs fertilised by two sperms, so they're genetically the same as a brother or sister—they just develop in the womb together. The other type is identical twins. This is different and much rarer, and occurs when a fertilised egg splits in two as it's growing. The resulting babies are from the same fertilised egg and are therefore genetically identical.

WHAT ABOUT NON-IDENTICAL TWINS?

Usually one egg is released from the ovaries each month, but a gene has been identified that—when present—can increase the chances a woman will release more than one egg at a time when she ovulates. As explained earlier, if these are then fertilised, non-identical twins occur. This gene doesn't "skip" generations but—as boys don't ovulate—it's possible that if one generation has all boys, the effects wouldn't be seen until these males have daughters they pass the gene on to. These daughters may then have twins, giving the illusion that the twins have "skipped" a generation.

WHAT ABOUT IDENTICAL TWINS?

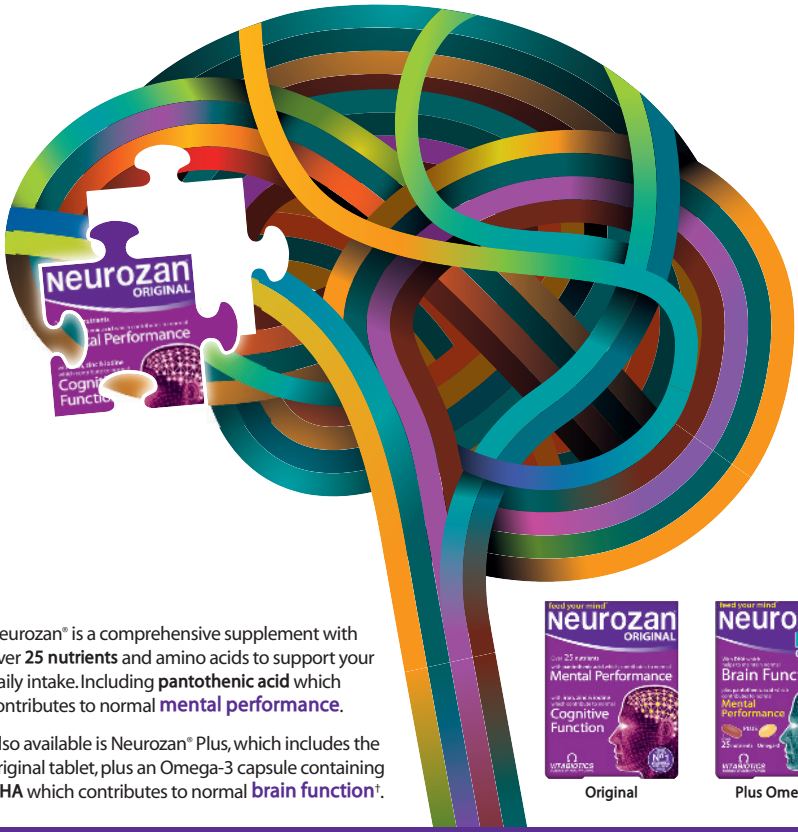
No gene responsible for identical twins has been found, so it's not passed down in families and certainly doesn't skip generations. If there's more than one set of identical twins in a family, it's just coincidence.

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID HUMPHRIES

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But bears like Percy will never forget. We have the responsibility of caring for them for the rest of their lives. With 300 hungry mouths to feed, funds are running short. Please don't forget these bears: help give them the life they deserve.



Percy the dancing bear

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Christmas Gift Guide

Stuck for present ideas? Our writers share their top picks in the areas of travel, fashion, beauty, technology, homes, gardens, books and food



TRAVEL

BY CATHY ADAMS



For Him

C9 WORLDTIMER WATCH, £995

Every respectable traveller needs a good watch. British watchmaker Christopher Ward's signature C9 Worldtimer has a 3D world map on the dial that displays two time zones—so you'll never miss your flight *(christopherward.co.uk)*.

For Her

SPA DAY PACKAGE, FROM £165

A spa day at Ockenden Manor in West Sussex is pure luxury. Treat your loved one to the signature Elemental Rebalancing Ritual, designed to return bodies to vitality *(ockendenmanor.skchase.com)*.





The Difficult One

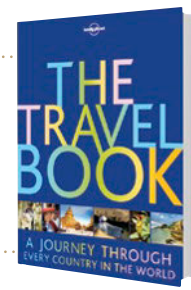
A TRIP TO LAPLAND, FROM £1,579

Spend days at northern Finland's Muotka Wilderness Lodge going on husky safaris—and nights spotting the northern lights. Inghams offers seven-night trips on a full-board basis *(inghams.co.uk)*.

For Kids

***THE TRAVEL BOOK*, £40**

Spark wanderlust with the new edition of Lonely Planet's book—a photographic journey through every single country of the world. Expect incredible images and quirky facts to educate and entertain *(amazon.co.uk)*.



FOOD & DRINK

BY RACHEL WALKER

For Kids



NUTCRACKER, £34
Rococo is responsible for some of the best chocolate, and this traditional nutcracker model is made from their organic house-blend with hand-painted detail. Our only criticism? It's almost too beautiful to eat *(rococochocolates.com)*.



For Her

ZIGGI ZAZU TEAPOT, £46
This modern heirloom, made from bone china, takes inspiration from African tribal prints to bring a splash of colour to elevenses. You can even buy a matching milk jug *(t2tea.com)*.

For Him

THE ULTIMATE BACON SANDWICH KIT, £32
Start curing your own bacon at home (original, sweet or smoky) and enjoy with an artisanal sauce *(rossandrossfood.co.uk)*.





The Difficult One

MONTHLY LATEST RELEASES CLUB, £105
This subscription from Craved means the recipient receives three monthly packages of artisanal and craft goodies—from chocolate to beer, jerky and pickles *(cravedlondon.com)*.

HOME & GARDEN

BY LYNDA CLARK



For Her

AGATE CANDLE HOLDER, £15

Agate is formed within fractures between lava flows and, when sliced, makes for exquisite and unique candle holders—perfect for adding a touch of natural beauty to the home *(nhmshop.co.uk)*.

For Him

WESTWOOD SPEAKER, £79.99

No man can resist technology and this retro-inspired speaker is compact, stylish and works through Bluetooth to play music from a smartphone *(gporetro.com)*.





For Kids

PLAY SHOP AND THEATRE, £145

This flawlessly combines playtime and learning. The theatre element lets children explore their creativity, storytelling and use of words, while the shop will help with numbers and counting *(gltc.co.uk)*.

The Difficult One

PERSONALISED MUG, £8

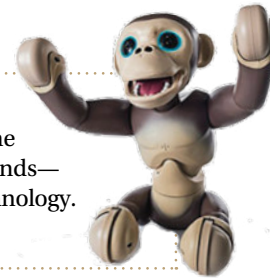
This attractive mug can be used to enjoy a morning coffee, afternoon tea or delicious hot chocolate—and the recipient's initial lends a special touch *(marksandspencer.com)*.



TECHNOLOGY

BY OLLY MANN

For Kids



ZOOMER CHIMP, £99.99
This charming chimpanzee follows you round the room, stands up on his own and recognises commands—"stand", "do a flip", etc—through voice-recognition technology. And it doesn't require bananas *(argos.co.uk)*.



For Him

SKY Q, FROM £44 A MONTH
With multi-room viewing, an integrated on-demand library, a compatible app *and* 2TB of recording space, the men will never be short of something to watch *(sky.com)*.

For Her



UNDER ARMOUR HEALTHBOX, £349
This has a wristband to count your steps, a set of scales to keep track of your weight and a heart-rate monitor to wear during workouts. It's sleek and oddly compelling to use *(htc.com)*.



The Difficult One

REBEL TECH KIT, £10
Sugru is mouldable glue that comes in a variety of colours. It's manipulable like Blu-Tack, but after 24 hours sets to form rubber. I've used mine to make a cable tidy that affixes to my filing cabinet. Useful *(sugru.com)*.

FASHION & BEAUTY

BY GEORGINA YATES



For Her

THE GLAM CLAM BRUSH SET, £59.99
A fresh set of make-up brushes is a fail-safe present for any woman who wears make-up on a daily basis. These are vegan, cruelty free, super-soft *and* absolutely beautiful *(spectrumcollections.com)*.

For Him



DRESSING GOWN, £50
There's nothing like snuggling into a fluffy dressing gown by the fire on a stormy night—it's one of the few luxuries afforded by bad British weather! Treat your favourite man to this luxury gown *(debenhams.com)*.



For Kids

FLEECE AND JERSEY HAT, FROM £12.50
Fun, colourful and quirky, young boys and girls are sure to look cute as a button in any one of Lizzie Shirt's unisex fleece and jersey hats. They're all hand-made too *(lizzieshirt.co.uk)*.

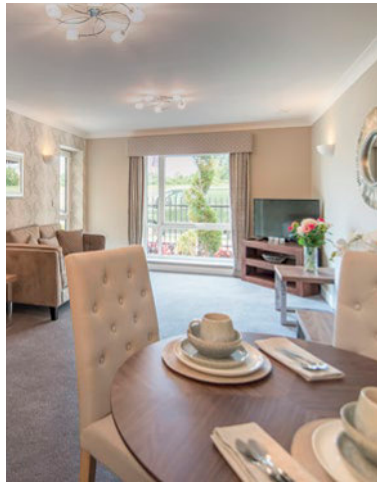
The Difficult One

MERRY AND RENEWED SET, £60
Murad's products are unisex—so difficult aunts and uncles are covered. With £117-worth of products, this high-end set of treats for the skin is great value *(murad.co.uk)*.



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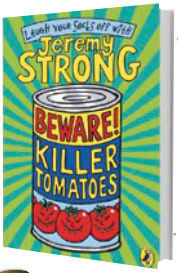
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BOOKS

BY JAMES WALTON

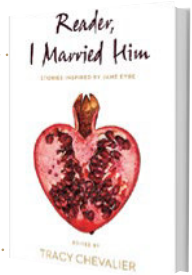


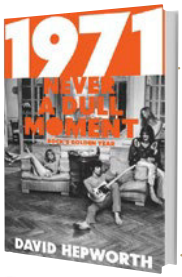
For Kids

***BEWARE! KILLER TOMATOES*, £5.99**
The question of how to get eight-year-old boys reading troubles many parents. In my experience, though, there's a simple two-word answer: Jeremy Strong. I'm reliably informed that this is his masterpiece *(bookdepository.com)*.

For Her

***READER, I MARRIED HIM*, £12.99**
Published for the 200th anniversary of Charlotte Brontë's birth, this contains 21 stories by leading women writers, all inspired—some directly, some less so—by Jane Eyre. A fine celebration and a great read *(waterstones.com)*.



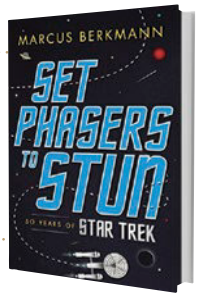


For Him

***1971*, £20**
Presuming the "him" is a middle-aged music lover, you can't go wrong with David Hepworth's *1971*. Packed with top anecdotes, this is a warm and entertaining reminder of when LPs ruled the world *(amazon.co.uk)*.

The Difficult One

SET PHASERS TO STUN: 50 YEARS OF STAR TREK, £13.99
Markus Berkmann's tome is an affectionately irreverent history, full of terrific jokes—and fascinating facts that readers will want to share *(amazon.co.uk)*.



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100 Word STORY

Our **ultra-short-story competition** is back for its seventh year, so send us your tiny tale! Over the page are two stories to give you inspiration—one from a published author and one from a reader. There are also prize details and instructions on how to enter. Good luck!

Julian Barnes
12 Months



IN JANUARY THEY MET.

By February he was beginning to doubt they were suited.

In March she became pregnant.

All April and May they discussed the matter.

In June she decided to have the baby.

In July he persuaded himself that he had always wanted a child.

Throughout August all was quiet.

In September he offered to give up his job as her career was more important to her than his was to him.

In October she accepted and he became a househusband.

By November she was beginning to doubt that they were suited.

In December the child was born.

■ **This story was first published in *Reader's Digest* October 2011 issue**

Sarah Harding-Roberts
The Most Intelligent



"IT IS NOT EASY BEING the most intelligent creature on the planet. It sounds like it ought to be rather brilliant—I spend my days knowing that I am capable of curing all human disease and hardship; however I am also a small Chihuahua residing in Beverley Hills.

I maintain my resolve despite the inane daily cooing of a teenager whom I attempt to express my vast knowledge to with very limited success.

One day I shall communicate what I can, but until then I am safe in the knowledge that it is I, Fluffykins, who is a good boy.

■ **This story was submitted to last year's 100-Word-Story Competition**

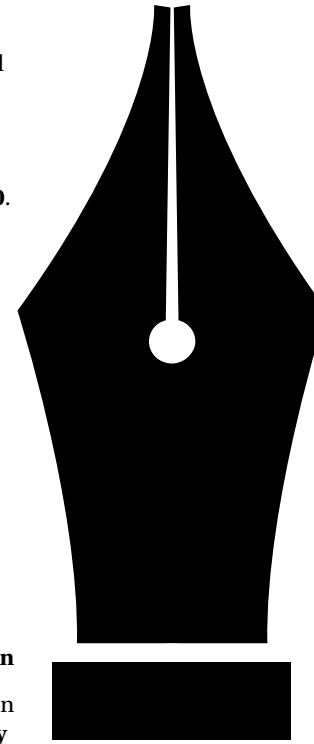


Rules: Please ensure that submissions are original, not previously published and 100 words long (not including the title). Don't forget to include your full name, address, email and daytime phone number when filling in the form. We may use entries in all print and electronic media. Contributions become world copyright of *Reader's Digest*.

Entry is open only to residents of the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and Republic of Ireland. It is not open to employees of Vivat Direct Ltd (t/a Reader's Digest), its subsidiary companies and all others associated with this competition, their immediate families and relatives living in an employee's household. The judges' decision is final.

Terms and Conditions

- There are three categories—one for adults and two categories for schools: one for children aged 12–18 and one for children under 12.
- In the adult category, the winner will receive **£2,000** and two runners-up will each receive **£200**.
- In the 12–18s category, the winner will receive a **Samsung Galaxy Tab S2 (9.7" Tablet, 32 GB)** and a **Samsung Gear S2 Smartwatch**, plus **£150** for their school. Two runners-up will each receive **£100**.
- In the under-12s category, the winner will receive a **Samsung Galaxy Tab S2 (9.7" Tablet, 32 GB)**, plus **£100** for their school. Two runners-up will each receive **£75**.
- Your stories should be original, unpublished and exactly 100 words long. The competition opens at **1pm on October 21** and closes at **5pm on February 20**. Submit your story online at **readersdigestco.uk/100-word-story-competition**
- The editorial team will pick a shortlist of three in each category and post them online on **February 27**. You can vote for your favourite, and the one with the most votes wins the top prize. Voting will close at **5pm on March 20** and the winning entries will be published in our June issue.
- The entry forms are on our website, along with details of the prizes.



For more information on the 100-Word-Story Competition and how to enter online, visit **readersdigest.co.uk/inspire/100-word-story**



Bakeries

From superlative sourdough to first-class cakes, the trend for baking is firmly on the rise

BY FIONA HICKS


Best
of
British

Hart's Bakery

BRISTOL

This unique establishment is a labour of love for former restaurant pastry chef Laura Hart. Situated under an old railway arch in Bristol's Temple Meads station, the bakery has an open-plan kitchen—so not only can you order a morning croissant and a hot cup of coffee, you can watch it being made.

"Nowadays people are much more aware of what goes into their food and how it's made, with more emphasis on quality and sustainability," says Laura. "We love customers being able to see what we're making and be able to ask questions, or come and have a closer look."

It may be a simple approach but it's far from easy, as Laura and her team favour traditional, exacting methods. Those croissants, for example, take three days to make—and, boy, can you taste it.

■ **Visit hartsbakery.co.uk for details**





Brick House Bakery

LONDON

Husband-and-wife founders Fergus and Sharmin Jackson once worked in advertising, but decided they needed to explore their passion for bread-making. Quitting their jobs, they moved to the "spiritual home" of sourdough, San Francisco, and

PREVIOUS IMAGE: © L.TROTT/SHUTTERSTOCK





Fergus and Sharmin Jackson (right) followed their passion to set up East Dulwich's Brick House Bakery in 2012

threw themselves into learning the craft for six months. They started their own business back in London in 2012, and have grown rapidly to become one of the top bread suppliers to the capital's hippest eateries.

The epicentre of the Brick House operation is equally cool. Cream walls, wooden chairs and wire shelves loaded with loaves set the minimalist tone, but everything here is directed towards maximum flavour. Settle into one of the communal tables to indulge in thick and crispy sourdough toast lathered with butter and home-made Nutella, plus flaky pastry confections.

■ **Visit brickhousebread.com for details**

East Avenue Bakehouse

LIVERPOOL

This must be one of the friendliest bakeries in the country. Founded by lifelong pals Charlotte Jones and Jo Byers (the name comes from East Avenue in Bournemouth, where both ladies lived in their childhood), they've formed a team who have genuine affection for one another. It makes for a lovely atmosphere as soon as you walk in—helped, of course, by the seductive aroma of baked goods.

"Both Charlotte and I wanted to create somewhere that *we'd* want to go," says Jo. "We decided on Liverpool as a location because of the culture; people are honest and loyal, and it's not a pretentious food city."

Not only do their hearty loaves fly off the shelves, but their visitors—70 per cent of whom are regulars—can also enjoy local, seasonal dishes.

■ **Visit eastavenuebakehouse.co.uk for details**







Leakers

DORSET

Stepping into this Bridport institution is like stepping back in time. The first loaves rose here in the 1830s, according to records—and the old coal pit, used to fire the ovens, is still there (though it's now used to store their organic flour).

It's not surprising that historical



Leakers still uses family recipes that are more than 100 years old

premises such as these adhere to time-honoured traditions. All loaves are hand-made on site, using just the traditional water, flour and yeast (or levain for their sourdoughs).

Their Dorset Apple Cake has also been a favourite for more than a century. Says bakery director Jemima Dasent, "It's made to the traditional Leaker family recipe today by Jo Hawker—the granddaughter of the original George Leaker who gave his name to the bakery in 1914." Unsurprisingly, they sell out quickly.

■ **Visit leakersbakery.co.uk for details**

Falko

EAST LOTHIAN

Hailing from Heilbronn, near Stuttgart, the mononymous Falko is a Konditormeister—a state-qualified master pastry chef. In Germany, the profession is revered and highly regulated. Apprentices must serve at least five years in the industry and pass several tough exams in order to be awarded an official title.

"Being a Konditormeister isn't simply about being able to bake. It's much more complicated," says Falko. He eschews modern conveniences in favour of preserving time-trusted methods (he won't, for example, rely on raising agents, preferring to take the time to beat air into eggs). Crucially, he also favours flavour over style. "I want to eat cake, not look at them," he explains.

His wares are devoured at various markets in Edinburgh. If you prefer to sit and savour your *baumkuchen* with a warm drink, you can also find them at the Kaffehaus on Bruntsfield Place.

■ **Visit falko.co.uk for details**





This village bakery started off as a refreshment stand for hungry shepherds

a pie at the end of the day if sales went well. The bakery opened a cafe in response to demand from the shepherds and—although the market is no more—it's still going strong.

Even today, the town is the sort of place where time moves at a different pace—especially in the bakery. Step inside and you can leave modern, frenetic culture behind: sourdough loaves take days to make, coffee is brewed to perfection and cushioned arm-chairs in the cafe mean patrons can enjoy both sweet and savoury goods in a leisurely manner. Take a book with you and you could be happily ensconced all day.



Broughton Village Bakery

CUMBRIA

Broughton-in-Furness is a quiet, historic market town on the southern boundary of the Lake District. At the turn of the century, there was an auction market held here every Tuesday. Shepherds would walk miles to buy and sell their flock, enjoying a cup of tea on arrival and

■ Visit broughtonvillagebakery.com for details



Robert Ditty was named UK Baker of the Year in 2011; (below) Ditty's award-winning oatcakes



Ditty's Home Bakery

LONDONDERRY

The story behind this Castledawson institution is a tale of daring determination. Set up in 1963 by Mr Ditty, the business grew steadily in the following decades while overcoming huge struggles—not least the destruction of the premises by a terrorist bomb during the height of the Northern Irish troubles. Nevertheless, the bakery's popularity held fast and a second site was opened in Magherafelt.

Tragedy then struck again when Mr Ditty died unexpectedly in the 1980s. His son Robert, who had spent summers and school holidays watching and learning from his father, stepped up to keep the family tradition going.

More than 50 years after turning out their first loaf, the Mr Ditty name remains famous in the county and beyond. Bakers start at 3am to ensure their Main Street shop is filled with soda farls, buns and potato breads by opening time. It's best to get there early if you want first pick!

■ **Visit dittysbakery.com for details**

Are you a regular at an excellent bakery? Email readersletters@readersdigest.co.uk and tell us about it!

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Gtech





Introducing The All-New Gtech AirRam Mk.2

Now It's Even Better!

For once the hype is justified, because the brand new Gtech AirRam Mk.2 vacuum cleaner really will make it easier and faster to clean your home

THE NEW MODEL is the result of four years of research and redesign. Gtech have listened to customers and designed out the things everyone hates about heavy, old vacuums. They've come up with something that's genuinely different—and it's available right now.

So what do you get with the new **Gtech AirRam?** You get a high-performance vacuum that weighs just 3.5kg. It's cordless, so you can stop worrying about plug sockets or stretching power cords round corners. And yet it has the power to clean your home thoroughly, even dreaded pet hair.

Reader's digest LIVING

There are no settings to change as you glide from room to room. The lithium-ion battery gives you a remarkable runtime of up to 40 minutes on a single charge—and it's designed to use less energy than a traditional upright, so it's kinder to your pocket as well.

As well as the new patented **AirLOC** dirt-collection system, the **AirRam Mk.2** has cleaner emptying: dust and dirt is compressed into the unique snail-shell bin forming a tubular bale. This can then be ejected into a dustbin with a slide of the dirt ejector arm, meaning no annoying dust clouds when you empty. There's even an LED light, so you can see into dark corners—dirt and dust really does have nowhere to hide! Oh, and because the handle slides neatly into the body, the AirRam needs less room to store than a traditional upright.

It's the future of cleaning—see it in action at **gtech.co.uk.**



"Scent maverick" Jo Malone, **53**, is one of the world's most successful entrepreneurs, responsible for creating a globally renowned beauty business and, more recently, her new brand Jo Loves.

If I Ruled the World
Jo Malone

Entrepreneurship would be studied from the age of seven. If we engaged children properly then, by the time they were teenagers, they'd understand how to start a small business and where their passions lay. My dad had a market stall, so from an early age I was taught the importance of the four Ps: product, place, price and promotion. I was privileged that entrepreneurship was made real for me.

Common sense would triumph over red tape. We're getting to a point where we can't say or do things without fear: we're tying ourselves in knots, scared of taking risks or speaking our minds. We need to work together as communities and have respect for each other. Having different opinions is great; it challenges our thinking. My first business started with me experimenting with three different plastic jugs and saucepans—but health and safety would never allow it now.



ILLUSTRATED BY JAMES SMITH

We'd share our shops to help small businesses. We've done this in our own Jo Loves shop and it's really wonderful. For a day we clear our product to the back of the store and share our space with entrepreneurs who might otherwise struggle to showcase *their* product. It's giving them a step up the ladder.

No child would go to school without a proper breakfast. I'm involved with the charity Magic Breakfast, which provides healthy breakfasts to kids in disadvantaged areas of this country. It enables them to concentrate in lessons, ready to learn. What could be more important than that?

I used to go to school hungry. I know what it's like to be a child and come home to find nothing but a single egg and a bit of cheese in the fridge. I was always grateful for the Rich Tea biscuit and milk I got at break-time at school. A lot of parents struggle to feed their children; some of the stories behind Magic Breakfast are heartbreaking.

I'd paint wonderful smells into the fabric of life. I'm not talking about scented candles but actually having a paintbrush of fragrance. Smell can change your emotions and how you feel about a place. Imagine how much better life would be if stations, public transport or schools smelled really good. When our house burned down we had to move into rented accommodation and my son said it didn't feel right. So I got Jo Loves' signature fragrance, Pomelo, and put it on every piece of furniture. When he returned from school, he said, "Now this smells like home."

Two days a year we'd celebrate success. The country would join together and consider all the great things we've achieved in our lives, from the small triumph of a win at sports day to the joy of overcoming an illness. The media could only report positive news. We'd create a feel-good factor that would permeate into our everyday lives, making us more grateful and changing the way we think.

I'd accomplish my dream of making a school for the senses. Like many dyslexics or dyspraxics, I think outside the norm. While you see a colour, I actually smell it. Some people see colour when they hear music. I'd like to unlock the differences in people and show them they have something special to offer the world.

I'd build my school in the South of France and every sense would come alive—and the grass would smell of raspberries... ■

As told to Caroline Hutton

Jo Malone's autobiography *My Story* is out now, published by Simon and Schuster. Learn more about Jo Loves at joloves.com

The Future of Care: PART THREE

Who's Looking After You?

In the final instalment of our three-part series looking at care for retirees, **Eimear O'Hagan** meets the over-60s taking matters into their own hands

© HALFPOINT/SHUTTERSTOCK



THE 60 CANDLES ON THE CAKE have been blown out, the free bus pass has been applied for and you're getting used to your new "pensioner" title. So what now?

You may not realise it, but you're at a crossroads. You can slide into your later years, resigning yourself to an armchair and a loss of autonomy, as did previous generations.

Or, more excitingly, you can view this as a new chapter in your life and seize the opportunity to invest in yourself after years of dedicating time to your family and/or your career. Practise "self-care"—taking control of your own physical and mental well-being—and these years could be the best of your life.

According to Dr Laurence Gerlis, of independent GP practice samedaydoctor, self-care is more vital than ever before.

"We have an expanding older population, as well as a National Health Service under pressure. It's vital people do everything they can to care for their own well-being. In the past there's been a culture of over-reliance on the NHS and a lack of personal responsibility; an assumption a doctor can always cure what's gone wrong.

"But as we get older it can be harder to fix our bodies, which is why we should do everything to look after ourselves, in a bid to minimise age-related problems."

But what exactly is self-care?

"It's a very individual concept," continues Dr Gerlis. "There's no 'prescription' for it, as what makes people feel physically well, happy and mentally stimulated will vary. For one person it could be taking up walking or swimming, for the next it's French lessons or a book club.

"In general, it's all about keeping active, maintaining social networks and feeling mentally well, all of which have a very beneficial effect on one's overall well-being. Regardless of your age, it's never too early, or late, to begin."

> ***"We should do everything in our power to look after ourselves, in a bid to minimise age-related problems"***

Professor James Goodwin, chief scientist at Age UK, agrees that the benefits of self-care are far-reaching.

"We know the risk of illness rises as we age—but with effective self-care, health conditions can be managed well so they don't prevent people from leading full and independent lives. In other words, we can age healthily.

"Social isolation can have a dramatic effect on health. In fact, recent scientific research has



Learning new skills is a form of "self-care"

© MONKEY BUSINESS IMAGES/SHUTTERSTOCK

discovered that loneliness is as bad for us as being clinically obese, or being an alcoholic. So taking up activities or hobbies, which lead to interaction with other people, has a knock-on effect on physical well-being.

"Importantly, feeling in control of your health and well-being, participating in society and remaining autonomous boosts your self-esteem and confidence."

The benefits are clear—but will this generation of retirees buy into the concept of self-care? Dr Gerlis believes so.

"This age group have lived very full lives. Some have come through the war, they've had fulfilling careers, travelled and they want a 'good' retirement. They're aspirational and want these years to be full and interesting—and they know that to enjoy and make the most of them, they must invest in their physical and mental health."

We spoke to four over-60s who are reaping the rewards of self-care.

Anthea Parker, 60, is a retired teacher. She lives in Cardiff

"WHEN MY HUSBAND IAN DIED in December 2014, ten days after being diagnosed with cancer, I was devastated. He was just 54.

After raising our two daughters, now in their twenties, we'd planned to retire together and live these years to the fullest. At first, the thought of spending the next 20 years of my life, maybe longer, without him left me feeling lost. I had dark days when I didn't want to get out of bed. I realise now I was in deep shock, having lost him so quickly.

But as time passed, it dawned on me that life is so precious and none of us can predict what's round the corner. I realised I could sit at home and grieve for Ian—or I could get out there and make the most of every moment of my life.

Three months after Ian died, a friend mentioned a choir run by the charity Tenovus Cancer Care, which was for anyone affected by cancer. I've always loved to sing so

> ***Not only have I made new friends, but I leave choir rehearsals feeling so positive***



I was intrigued, and I agreed to go along to a rehearsal.

That decision really has changed my life. We rehearse once a week and perform concerts to fundraise for the charity. We sing uplifting songs such as "You've Got a Friend" and "Lean on Me"—songs which really resonate with all of us.

Not only have I made new friends, who I spend time with outside the choir, but I leave rehearsals feeling so positive.

After a demanding career in education, I relish having a focus in my retirement years. I fundraise for the charity too, including trekking to Machu Picchu, where I scattered some of Ian's ashes.

I know he'd approve of my decision to look after myself. Living a good life is the best tribute I can pay him."

Mick Tague, 68, is a retired carpenter. He lives in Camden, London

"TWICE A WEEK I leave my home with a spring in my step, excited at the prospect of the day ahead at The Camden Town Shed. There, I'll spend my time working on my latest carpentry project, helping other members with theirs and enjoying a cuppa and a blether with other blokes my age.

Discovering a new social outlet—and a chance to indulge my love of woodwork—has boosted my quality of life and my health.

In August 2010, I was diagnosed with throat cancer and had to have radiotherapy and chemotherapy. Until then I'd been a heavy smoker and drinker, and most of my social life revolved around my local pub. My consultant told me if I didn't change my lifestyle, I was wasting my time having treatment.

I stopped drinking and smoking, drifted away from unhealthy friendships and had to retire. I'm single and live alone, many miles from my grown-up son, and quickly became isolated. I began to suffer from bouts of depression and felt that life was passing me by.

My son bought me a computer and encouraged me to look into activities in my area to get me out of the house. At first I was reluctant—I'm a youthful 60-something at heart and the idea of OAP clubs just didn't appeal.

Then I came across The Shed, a club for older men and women where you can work on woodwork projects and socialise. You pay as much as you can afford for materials.

I've been going twice a week for three years and it's made such a difference. Being busy and feeling connected with society again has boosted my self-esteem. I have new friends to confide in if I feel worried about something, and teaching other members has given me my self-confidence back.

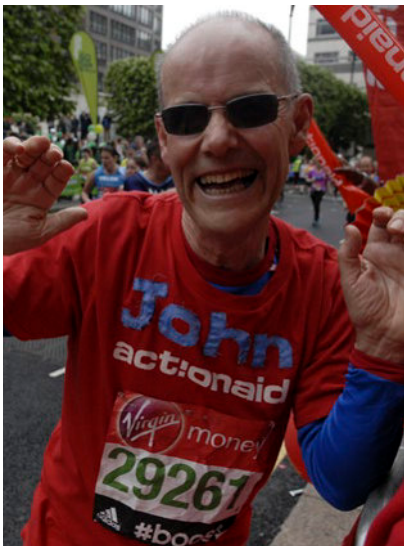
It's kept me away from my old bad habits and haunts, helping my body recover from cancer. I feel better now than I have in years. If I hadn't joined The Shed, I'd be floating unhappily through retirement."



John Ormond, 71, is a semi-retired company director. He lives in Fleetwood, Lancashire

"WHEN I TOLD MY MOTHER, who passed away earlier this year in her nineties, that I was taking up marathon running at the age of 60, she thought I was mad. While I saw it as a way of maintaining my physical health as I entered my older years—and a mental focus as I began to wind down my career—she was concerned I was too old.

I suppose that just highlights how my generation have come to understand the value of self-care compared with our parents, who believed later life inevitably meant a less active one.



I took up running in my mid-fifties after a bout of ill health. I realised I needed to look after myself better so started jogging on the seafront near my home, as well as on a treadmill in the gym.

When I was 59 I saw a 93-year-old being interviewed on TV, who was running the London Marathon, and I felt inspired. With my sixties round the corner, I didn't want to sit back and let my health decline when I'd worked hard to get fit. Nor did I want time to pass aimlessly. I wanted to set myself goals. If a 93- year-old could run a marathon, so could I!

Since then I've run 12 marathons —one a year—including London, Manchester and Stratford, raising around £20,000 for the charity Action Aid in the process.

The physical benefits have been tremendous. I suffer from arthritis and asthma, but because I'm fit and strong I can manage the conditions and they don't stop me leading a normal life. And with a marathon every year, I'm never bored. I love having a goal to work towards.

My wife Pat, 62, three children and six grandchildren are very supportive and proud of me.

I don't want to just exist in my older years—I want to live a full and active life, and look after my body and health."

Ilona Johnson-Gibbs, 75, is a fine-art dealer. She lives in Stow-on-the-Wold, Gloucestershire



"TWO YEARS AGO I fell backwards down a flight of stairs, suffering a concussion and bruising. Although I never give much thought to my age and I'm not afraid of growing old, it led me to think that perhaps I needed to spend some time strengthening my body, having done no exercise for over 50 years.

As a child I took ballet lessons and dreamed of becoming a professional ballerina. But my father felt it wasn't a stable career and I stopped dancing in my early teens—although I never forgot my love of ballet.

I knew ballet could help with my balance and strength, but I didn't know if any teacher would take me on in my seventies. I contacted the Royal Academy of Dance, who put me in touch with a teacher in my area for an assessment.

Nervously, I arrived at the class and was elated when I realised my body still remembered how to move to the music. The teacher said I was a natural, which was lovely to hear after so long.

> ***Women in their mid-twenties and upwards tell me I'm an inspiration***

Now I attend a class three times a week and a monthly masterclass. I'm the oldest in the class—what's known as a 'silver swan'—dancing alongside women in their mid-twenties and upwards. They tell me I'm an inspiration.

I feel stronger, my posture has improved and the symptoms of the arthritis in my feet have lessened greatly. Mentally, it gives me a great sense of tranquillity and well-being.

I've always been a 'do-er' and ballet gives me that feeling of working towards new achievements. I treat my classes like work—and I enjoy the sense of satisfaction.

Age is just a number. It shouldn't stop anyone living life to the full."

Choosing The Right Bathing Solution

Bath or Shower?

Today, many more elderly people choose to stay in their own homes for as long as possible. This often requires making changes to the home to accommodate changing needs. In the bathroom, this generally means swapping a traditional bath for either a walk-in style bath or a shower.

Showers are by far the most popular choice. They come in two basic designs—trays and wet rooms. Wet rooms are when the floor is made waterproof so there is no "step" into the shower. Trays are much cheaper and generally more reliable. A fold-down seat makes it convenient to use the shower standing up or in a seated position. Grab rails are positioned within the shower area for peace of mind and added security. It's also a good idea to have a grab-strength shower head rail, as this is one of the most common rails to hold onto when feeling unsteady.

But, if a long hot soak to relieve aching muscles and joints is your idea of bathroom bliss, then a walk-in bath is must. And if you like the idea of both, a walk-in bath with shower could be just the right option.

Like showers, walk-in baths also come in two basic designs. One is like a standard bath with a door that allows you to enter and exit the bath without stepping over the edge—but you would still need to lower yourself into a bathing position. The other is more like a hot tub, with an entry/exit door and a moulded upright seating position inside. One of the main criticisms of walk-in baths is that the user has to sit in the bath while it fills with water and again when it empties, but this can be overcome easily by choosing a model with an integrated heated seat.

Whichever solution you choose, changing your bathroom to fit your individual needs can be life-changing.

Reader's digest LIVING



"I CAN NOW BATHE WITHOUT A CARE IN THE WORLD"

J BOLES, SOLIHULL

Premier Care in Bathing

To find out more talk to Premier Care in Bathing today.
FREEPHONE: 0800 988 4232 and quote ref P61011K.
Or visit **readersdigest.co.uk/premierbathrooms**

The Future of Flight

Flying in economy? Get ready for an upgrade

BY PAUL SILLERS

IT'S BAD ENOUGH GETTING THROUGH THE SERIES of queues at major airports—check-in, passport control, security and boarding. But the relief at getting to your seat can evaporate with cramped conditions, full lockers and the realisation that you should have brought your own sandwiches. Flying, for many of us, has turned from a thrilling experience into a tiresome ordeal.

With the global air-passenger numbers set to double to more than six billion in the next 20 years, according

Icelandair lighting simulates the Aurora Borealis; time to snooze in Air Astana's Economy Sleeper Class

ICELANDAIR; AIR ASTANA



to industry statistics, it's a challenge that airlines are trying to confront. And with some success.

When Jill and Jeremy Joseph from London flew from Heathrow to Nice for a medical conference in Monaco recently, they noticed a number of improvements to BA's economy cabin: contoured leather seats with fully adjustable headrests and relocated magazine receptacles—now at the top of the seat backs to free up some extra leg space—plus tablet holders for attaching iPads. BA's revamp also includes mood lighting, powered by ecologically efficient light-emitting diodes (LEDs).

It's part of a global aero-industry trend towards using technology to put customers in their comfort zone.

Comfort isn't just about ergonomic seats, of course. It's about creating a sense of well-being all down the line—through crew attentiveness, cabin ambience and a sense of spaciousness. Catering and in-flight entertainment are factors too.

"I think BA exceeds the standard," says Jeremy, whose work as an eye surgeon makes him especially appreciative of visual aspects, though his comment also applies to the quality of service and the crew's experience underpinning it. Jill adds: "When we choose an airline, we want to feel we're in safe hands. Traditional airlines convey that sense of maturity and assurance. For us, that's a comfort factor."

NEW CONCEPTS

Successfully reconciling comfort for the maximum number of passengers with the limitations of aircraft cabins is the Holy Grail of the industry. Psychological factors have a role in building the comfort perception, but the big challenge for airlines is simply how to maximise physical space for economy-class passengers.

Every spring in Hamburg, airline executives converge on the Aircraft Interiors EXPO, where the latest cabin products are showcased by industry suppliers. Adventurous concepts and prototypes are exhibited.

At recent EXPOs, seating in all sorts of unconventional configurations have been proposed. Airbus filed a patent for a "reconfigurable passenger bench" in February—a seat that can be rapidly adapted for different combinations of passengers, from families with small children to people with restricted mobility.

It's not uncommon for the kind of cabin amenities enjoyed in first and business class to filter down to economy as airlines leapfrog each other to provide more comfort at the back of the plane. We've seen this already on long-haul flights, where fully flat beds, once the preserve of first class, have become the norm for business class across Europe.

Beds are now starting to appear in economy too. Air New Zealand got started with its "Skycouch", with a triple economy seat that converts



BA has introduced seat-back tablet holders for economy passengers

NICK MORRISH/BRITISH AIRWAYS

into a double bed. It's a trend that's starting to be seen in Europe, with Air Astana launching its "Economy Sleeper Class" between Kazakhstan and London Heathrow, Frankfurt, Paris and Hong Kong.

For many airlines, reconfiguring the seating isn't an option, but might something be done with existing seats? Swiss textiles company Lantal has come up with Pneumatic Comfort System (PCS), which lets passengers adjust the firmness of cushions.

The PCS cushions—which have been installed in some Lufthansa, Swiss, Austrian, jetBlue and edelweiss planes—are lighter than standard airline cushions, and this saving could be exploited to add further amenities.

CARRY ON CARRYING ON

Cabin comfort is also about having adequate stowage space for the paraphernalia that passengers bring onboard these days.

Predrag Sasic is a petrochemicals trader who flies every week from Zurich across Europe and beyond, with various airlines—in business and economy class. "My ever-changing work schedule and the fact that I have to hop on flights at short notice—sometimes with tight connections—means that there isn't time to check luggage into the hold. So a bit of extra overhead space would be welcome."

That would suit airlines too—speedier stowage of carry-on luggage helps shave off valuable seconds when boarding and disembarking.

Boeing has unveiled its solution in the form of "Space Bins". These overhead lockers have 48 per cent more capacity than previous versions of its 737; so 194 wheelie bags, rather than 132, can be stowed. Alaska Airlines was the first to install them last year, and European airlines Air Europa and Jet2.com are set to follow.

GETTING CONNECTED

Funnily enough, airlines are actually quite keen for us to bring our gadgets into the cabin. Personal electronic devices (PEDs), such as smartphones and tablets, are improving at such a pace that airlines are struggling to upgrade their seat-back entertainment systems fast enough.

Airlines are asking themselves why they should invest in entertainment systems that add weight, become obsolete quickly and deliver inferior quality compared to their passengers'



Boeing's Space Bins boost storage space

own devices. An aviation IT survey shows that two-thirds of passengers want to be able to use their own PEDs for in-flight entertainment.

Airlines have reacted: International Airlines Group recently struck a deal with aviation technology provider Gogo to bring its satellite-based high-speed broadband system to 118 BA, four Aer Lingus Boeing 757 and up to 15 Iberia long-haul aircraft. Installation starts next year on the BA fleet, with completion scheduled for 2019.

So the drive towards connectivity is gathering pace—although for now it's up to each airline to decide when and how passengers can access the mobile networks.

Passengers might like internet access using their own devices, but Predrag Sasic cautions that there has to be a balance: "On short flights I listen to music, and on long-haul I watch movies. I guess it would be useful to read emails on long flights, so you're not missing anything. On the other hand, sometimes it's nice not to be reachable."

APPEALING TO THE SENSES

Linking with our gadgets is one thing, but airlines are also trying to connect through our emotions, via the touchy-feely parts of the in-flight experience.

Those flying long-haul may have noticed artificially sequenced LED "mood lighting" that simulates the tones of sunset and sunrise, which, the makers maintain, can help reduce jet lag; Virgin Atlantic and Emirates are well known for this.

Mood-control lighting is spreading to short-haul flights too: Icelandair installed an LED system, Hekla Aurora, on one of its 757s last year, which uses flashing coloured lights to recreate the experience of the Aurora Borealis in the cabin.

The well-being effect of lighting isn't the only benefit. LEDs last ten times longer than previous lighting technologies. The system can even be adjusted to cast a orange glow to make food look more appetising.

Appealing to the senses takes in smell too. Iberia has created its own cabin fragrance called "Mediterráneo de Iberia". The scent is intended to give passengers a "sense of well-being", with notes of fruit, flowers and wood, and a touch of citrus.

BOEING

WHAT'S COOKING?

Meals are a key part of the in-flight experience on any self-respecting airline. While the smell and ambience of a restaurant can whet the appetite, the food has to meet expectations. At altitude, cabin pressure reduces our senses of taste and smell by around 30 per cent, so European carriers are using new approaches to making food more palatable while retaining traditional presentation.

Travellers increasingly expect the dishes they enjoy to be replicated at 30,000 feet. But much equipment is incompatible with onboard safety standards, and a niche industry has emerged making airliner-compatible espresso machines, convection ovens, skillets and rice steamers—to cater for the more adventurous tastes of the worldly-wise traveller.

When Predrag Sasic's wife Mira flew economy class from Zurich to Belgrade on Air Serbia, she felt the airline was recreating a sense of nostalgia: "Stewardesses were dressed like Pan Am crew and they served food with proper metal cutlery. I thought I was in for a return to the days of traditional service."

CARBON IS COMING

So much for the interior. What about the planes themselves? There are some subtle differences in the shape of planes these days. More and more of them have winglets, or sharklets —those pointy tips at the end of the wings. And if you're flying on Boeing's 787 Dreamliner, you may notice the zigzag-shaped trailing edge on the engines. These save fuel, reduce emissions, drive down ticket prices—and also improve the experience by reducing cabin noise.

All of these features are made possible by increasing use of carbon composite in aircraft construction. It's an incredibly tough and resilient material, composed of carbon fibres that are bonded and reinforced with polymers, which is superseding aluminium alloys and steel.

The latest Boeings and Airbuses, the Dreamliner and A350XWB, are around 50 per cent carbon composite, providing strength and weight advantages. Aesthetically, composite material also enables design in the cabin to be more fluid. A new cabin-design concept called Airspace by Airbus has already been incorporated into Airbus's new A330neo.

Airbus says that Airspace cabins will be "more relaxing, inspiring, beautiful and functional". Among the improvements will be larger overhead storage, more spacious toilets, wider seats and aisles, and unobstructed under-seat foot space.

THE HUMAN FACTOR

"Remember what it was like before Southwest Airlines? You didn't have hostesses in hot pants," declares a blonde air hostess in the airline's TV adverts of 1972. Some passengers may



A sense of spaciousness is central to Airbus's new Airspace economy cabin

lament the disappearance of revealing attire, but today's crew image is a little subtler—about assurance, service and a gentle sense of humour.

Jeremy recalls, "I was flying back to London from Namibia in June just as results of the EU Referendum were starting to come through, and the captain quipped through the PA system that he wasn't sure whether or not we would be landing in the EU that evening."

Mira echoes that appreciation: "It's so nice to step aboard an airline from your native country and feel a sense of being back home already."

The next trend in service will be the use of "big data", as airlines continue to capture more passenger intel and use it to ask if you want your favourite drink, as they address you and your companions by name.

Some data comes from passengers subscribing to loyalty programmes, creating a digital trail in their wake. Preferences are also tracked from online questionnaires and by listening to passenger comments and feedback on social media. So don't be surprised if, in the near future, crew have an idea of your musical tastes.

There are some things that smart technology will never replace. On Jill and Jeremy Joseph's flight back from Nice, the pilot intermittently related the goal tally of the Liverpool versus Sevilla match as the Europa League final progressed. In an age where the pilots are locked behind the cockpit door, "it's always nice to hear from the captain", says Jill, who appreciates that "pilots seem to have that mastery of understatement".

Let's hope that's one thing that doesn't change.

* * *

FANCY JOINING ONE OF THESE FACEBOOK GROUPS?

Nobody Ever Uses The White Crayon: **7,189 members**

Dressing Up As An Apple And Chasing Fat People: **131,733 members**

STOP MOVING!! I Need To Read Your Shirt: **257,973 members**

Terrorists Have Two Eyes, Pandas Have Two Eyes. Coincidence? I Think Not: **233,838 members**

LINDNER FOTOGRAFIE/AIRBUS

Reader's digest TECHNOLOGY

Upgrading The Smartphone By Adding Simplicity

SMARTPHONE TECHNOLOGY IS IMPROVING and evolving every day, with increasingly more functions and uses becoming available from your handset.

For one manufacturer though, alongside all of the research and development into technical improvements, their most important evolution has been the addition of simplicity.

Doro, the world leader in easy-to-use mobile phones, is working hard to make smartphone technology accessible to all—regardless of age or ability.



The Doro Liberto® 820 Mini is undoubtedly a powerful smartphone, with all the functionality of the many competitors on the market, but because of the simple and highly visual instructions, older users particularly will be able to do more—and faster.

The large screen is more forgiving to the touch, and with large icons to identify clearly where to find each function—from making a call to sending a message or accessing the internet—the 820 Mini has a simple logic. It also has loud and clear sound, and is hearing-aid compatible.

In addition, for each of the main functions, there are step-by-step guides built into the phone to help the new owner get used to the technology at their own pace.

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Langkawi, an archipelago of 104 islands, is surprisingly tourist-free

BY CATHERINE COLE

My Great Escape: Island Living

Robert Davies from London blisses out in the waters of Langkawi in Malaysia



Catherine has danced in Rio, been microlighting in South Africa and hiked the mountains of Oman

SANDSTONE MOUNTAINS ARE VISIBLE IN THE DISTANCE. The sun, raging down, makes the empty sea an alluring invitation. Diving into the cool water relaxes my muscles and the taste of salt on my lips immediately re-energises and soothes my sapped spirit.

This is Pantai Tengah Beach, on the southern side of Langkawi—an archipelago of around 100 islands in the Andaman Sea, just over the southern border of Thailand in Malaysia. I was here with my girlfriend Parita to swim and snorkel, in a part of Southeast Asia away from the traditional backpacker route.

The next day, I'm on a bumpy speed-boat ride packed with screaming Malays: all heading outwards on a tour of the islands, all whooping with delight. The first stop, Tasik Dayang Bunting (Lake of the Pregnant Maiden), gets its name from the surrounding mountain range that supposedly resembles a pregnant woman. The water here, unlike the frenzied monkeys playing on the path to the lake, is calm. But apart from a few Malays dipping their toes in the water, the lake is free of swimmers.

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Between the lake and the next stop, our boat pauses near Pulau Singa Besar—Island of the Big Lion—to observe the feeding of brahminy kite eagles and white-bellied sea eagles. Drivers of other boats moored in the area chuck bits of chicken at them: some eagles catch them in the air with their claws, while others swoop down and pluck them from the sea.

With all this tranquillity and great places to swim, Langkawi is a wonderful place to unwind. Just don't relax too much and fall asleep on the beach—you'll miss out on all the action.

UNWIND IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Return flights to Kuala Lumpur start from £450 with Malaysia Airlines (malaysiaairlines.com).





IN THE SAVOIE REGION OF FRANCE, the resort of Les Arcs is both a good introduction to skiing and a great destination to exercise your well-worn snow legs. It's a resort that suits both families with beginners and off-piste snowboarders looking for the high-octane stuff: long descents, wooded runs and even heli-skiing.

Next month, the resort gets a luxury shot in the arm as Taj-I Mah, the first five-star resort, launches in Les Arcs 2000. Even more reason to visit.

ASCEND INTO LUXURY

Inghams offers seven nights at Hotel Taj-I Mah from £1,239pp, including flights and transfers (01483 791 114, inghams.co.uk/ski-holidays).

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Tell us about your favourite holiday (send a photo too) and if we include it on this page we'll pay you £50. Go to **readersdigest.co.uk/contact-us**

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Things To Do This Month



MARRAKECH IN TWO MINUTES

■ **SNAP: THE MEDINA** Marrakech is ridiculously photogenic—and thankfully, in November, down to a reasonable temperature. The light, the earth tones of the medina and the energy of the souks are best enjoyed through a camera lens.

■ **STAY: PALAIS AZIZA & SPA** Hop in the car to visit the Palmeraie, a lush palm-tree-studded district full of spacious villas styled as hotels. The boutique Palais Aziza & Spa is one such property: perfect for cooling off from the buzzy medina (+212 (0) 524 329 988, palaisaziza.com).

■ **WALK: HIGH ATLAS MOUNTAINS** Alternate between yoga and hiking in the mountains just outside Marrakech with Satvada Retreats' small group this month. They offer a five-night, full-board trip from £949pp (020 3695 2375, satvada-retreats.co.uk).

SHORT/LONG HAUL: HOLIDAYS ON WATER



SHORT: Active Discovery on the Danube Cruise from Linz in Austria to the Hungarian capital Budapest and explore new surroundings each day. Activities include mountain climbing, canoeing or cycling—and relaxing on-board too, of course (0800 668 1843, avaloncruises.co.uk).

LONG: *Alila Purnama* A jaunt on the 150-foot *Alila Purnama* is a once-in-a-lifetime, blow-the-budget trip. The traditional Phinisi liveaboard offers incredible diving, spa experiences and panoramic views of topaz waters (alilahotels.com/purnama).

TRAVEL APP OF THE MONTH

Trail Wallet, Free, iOS. Trouble keeping tabs on your travel? This app allows you to set a budget, then record and convert your expenses back into your home currency.



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A Life Less ORDINARY



Anja and Victoria, one of the rescued children, in Nigeria

Danish woman Anja Ringgren Lovén sold everything she owned and moved to Nigeria to rescue children accused of witchcraft

Breaking the Spell

BY AMANDA RILEY-JONES

"IT BRINGS TEARS TO MY EYES TO THINK OF MY CHILDHOOD," says Anja Ringgren Lovén, who was born in Denmark in 1978. Despite her parents' divorce, Anja grew up in a tight, loving family and says, "My mum Linda took such good care of me, my twin sister Tina and our older sister Pia. After school, we cycled to the elderly home where she was a social and health worker. It was like our second home. Mum showed us that people should take good care of each other."

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Anja's fascination with other cultures started young. "If we didn't eat our food, Mum would tell us, 'African children are starving,' " she explains. "At eight, my dream was to go to Africa and make a difference. Throughout school I read many books about this continent."

After leaving school at 18, Anja spent a year on a kibbutz, travelled around the Middle East and worked as a flight attendant. But when her mum was diagnosed with cancer, Anja quit her job and cared for her full-time for nine months.

"My mum was the centre of my life," she says. "After she died, I was on shaky ground.

She moved city, took a hospital cleaning job and started—but dropped out—of nursing school.

By 2008, she was a working as a

THE TRAGEDY OF NIGERIA



The Federation of Nigeria is one of the poorest countries in the world and Africa's most populous country. Corruption, political instability, poor governance and religious conflict are dire problems for this former British protectorate. Despite Nigeria being a major oil producer, around half the population lives below the poverty line, literacy rates are low and up to five million people have HIV/Aids.

A combination of Christianity and native pagan religions has produced fertile ground for superstition. Says Unicef: "Until recently, violent allegations of witchcraft weren't typically levelled against children. Christian preachers, particularly from charismatic Pentecostal churches, have become part of the already-rich mix of culture and tradition in Central Africa. Whipping up emotions and charging families for exorcisms, these preachers have turned children's suffering into a lucrative business."

These "pastors" preach that families must pay for an expensive deliverance séance or abandon the child to live on the streets. Children are beaten and tortured to "confess" and even buried alive, beheaded or stabbed to death. Particularly vulnerable are orphans, those who have a new step-parent or anything that makes them different—a stutter, TB, being withdrawn or even gifted. Most accused seem to be boys between four and 14.

The government's 2008 Childs Rights Law made it a criminal activity to label a child a witch—but the law isn't enforced.

© JORDI C/SHUTTERSTOCK

manager in a department store when a TV documentary jolted her back to her first ambition in life. It told how "pastors" in sub-Saharan Africa are branding thousands of youngsters as witches.

"Children are being buried alive, beheaded, hanged in trees or beaten to death," Anja says, urgency in her voice. "If parents let the child stay, other family members risk being killed. And witch-hunting groups will steal the child in the night and take him into the woods for black magic. The child will not survive."

Anja, then 30, remembers, "From the outside, my life looked good. But it was shallow. The documentary made me realise it was time to follow my dream."



Anja gives water to two-year-old Hope, a photo that became world-famous

ANJA RESIGNED in 2010 and, the next year, flew out to Malawi where she volunteered for the charity DanChurchAid.

"I was sent to live with a very poor African family as an observer. I lost a lot of weight and felt how it was to be hungry every day and work hard from early morning until late at night. Finally I was living with the African children my mother had told me about and I knew what I was going to do for the rest of my life."

Still haunted by the *Witch Children of Africa* documentary, she made contact with a small orphanage for "witch" children in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, and offered them her help. The following year, Anja sold her apartment and everything she owned to fly back to Nigeria for good.

"To meet children who had been tortured and almost beaten to death made a deep impression on me," she says.

A week in, she joined a rescue mission to find Victor, a homeless nine-year-old. His stepfather had accused him of being a witch after a death in the family. "When we arrived the community was suspicious," she says. "Rescues are nerve-wracking

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because they can turn dangerous very quickly. Once the issue of witchcraft is raised, the tension can get high. We get threats and sometimes run away for our safety."

And, of course, Anja looks very much the outsider. "Some Nigerians believe that I'm a mermaid because of my tattoos. Many are afraid that white people will shoot them. As a white person, I also get criticism. Some think I'm rich and do this to make money," she says.

When the team eventually found Victor, he was thin, dirty and too terrified to speak. Anja continues, "The fear in his eyes was like a knife through my heart. I turned to get some water for him and my tears came. I couldn't look in his eyes; I had to look at his feet.

"When we first rescue them, the children are so fearful they're like wild animals. Some of them wet the bed. Most children tell us what has happened to them, many have been sexually abused.

"But after the children come to the orphanage, they all go to school and smile every day. They make me so proud. Painting, drawing, singing and dancing helps them express memories and feelings, and process the horrible torture and abuse."



Anja delivers her key message with Michael, Prince and Saviour

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ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT provides free and compulsory education, Unicef says that many Nigerian kids don't attend school because their labour is needed at home. At the orphanage all the children have lessons. "We empower them to be strong, independent adults and have a good career," says Anja. "It lays the foundation for a stronger nation."

She joyfully describes Victor's progress. "Now he's 13 and did a six-month computer course. It turns out he's very intelligent. He needs more years in school but will find work. He's still reserved, but he'll run to me and give me a hug."

At the orphanage, Anja fell in love with co-worker David Emmanuel Umen, a Nigerian law student and children's rights campaigner.

"When some of the staff didn't want a 14-year-old girl with HIV at the orphanage, David fought for her to stay," she remembers. "I saw this brave, amazing man. We started dating and talked about opening our own orphanage."

He founded the African Children's Aid Education and Development Foundation, and he and Anja opened their own children's home in 2014, gradually moving across 12 of the children they'd been caring for. That same year, Anja gave birth to their son, David Jnr. With the joy came a heightened sense of danger. "Now I'm a mother, protection comes first.

SOME OF THE CHILDREN ANJA HAS HELPED



SAVIOUR
"At seven, he was one of three brothers accused of being witches by their grandmother. They were cut with knives, beaten all over and held locked in a room for days with no food or water. They were forced to confess that they were witches. The youngest boy didn't survive, but Saviour and Samuel are both doing very well."



MARY
"At nine, she was found severely brutalised in the woods. She was hospitalised for more than a month after we rescued her, due to her severe wounds. She was raped on many occasions and diagnosed with numerous sexual infections."



PRINCE
"He was accused of being a witch four years ago by his father, who beat him almost every day. Prince ran away and was living on the streets for many months before he was found by police. He's now 11 and a very intelligent boy. When he came top in class, we bought him a new backpack."



Anja having fun with the children; (left) her son David Jnr (centre) with Miracle and Rita

Even for going to the market, I have armed bodyguards."

"Today we have 35 children under our wings," says Anja. "We have one building for boys, one for girls. Three to five children sleep in each room and they all have their own bed and closet." Neither she nor David draw a salary and their 12 members of staff are sponsored by private companies. David's family pay his school fees.

ANJA DOESN'T BLAME the poverty-stricken communities who are being indoctrinated to live in fear. She's passionate about the need to educate, create awareness and connect with locals to fight superstition.

"Everywhere you go, you see posters asking, 'Is there a witch? Deliverance from witches.' " she sighs. "Our work aims to promote the importance of education and we work close to the government through our advocacy work. We hire a school on a Saturday and talk face-to-face with the village chiefs. If we have dialogue with them, we can persuade them to phone us if a child has been accused."

Poignantly, the rescued children miss their families, and Anja says, "It's our responsibility to keep them connected whenever it's safe to do so. The children look forward to home visits and some eventually go back for a week in the school holidays."

These visits are also a powerful tool

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in the fight against superstition. "Weak children are more likely to be accused and cast out. When we take our kids to visit their village, they look healthy and strong and have their confidence back. The villagers realise the children aren't witches—and that they have been indoctrinated."

Anja spares her Facebook followers some of the tragedies. She's never forgotten the time a child was killed before the rescue team could arrive. "I saw blood on the ground," she says sadly. "My husband told me not to look. He tells me to focus my energy on the children we *are* able to rescue."

She returns to Denmark throughout the year—taking David Jnr—to raise money by giving talks. "In Denmark I can move around without bodyguards and not worry about danger. I spend two hours a day in the gym. Training gives me so much energy and clears my mind. It's like therapy."

In January, David and Anja started to build a bigger orphanage, in collaboration with Engineers Without Borders Denmark. "We'll start with 50 children and hope to expand," says Anja. "We'll welcome all villagers to take computer training here and use our health centre, which will be staffed by doctors and nurses. We're also building a football field so kids in the community can come and play with our children."

The new orphanage is called Land of Hope, named after an abandoned two-year-old they went to rescue in 2014. "We took him to the hospital but I didn't want him to be buried without a name, so I called him Hope," she remembers.

A poignant photo of Anja giving Hope water made headlines around the world. Donations flooded in to pay for his hospital treatment, while Rose, the orphanage nurse, stayed by his side for four weeks.

Today, he's a strong, chubby little boy. Anja says, "Hope now has 35 new brothers and sisters. To see him sit and play with my son is the greatest experience of my life. Our Land of Hope will be the future land for many children, where we'll give them love, care and protection."

To learn more about Anja's work and to make a donation, visit dinnoedhjaelp.dk. You can also follow Anja at facebook.com/DinNoedhjaelp

* * *

SAY THAT AGAIN?

The word **bae** has been voted the most annoying word of 2015 by readers of Metro.co.uk. According to the dictionary, **bae** is "used as a term of endearment for one's romantic partner", but it's been ruthlessly adopted by the advertising industry—as documented by the **Brands Saying Bae** Twitter account.

Should You Overpay Your Mortgage?

It can seem intimidating to have more money going out each month—but paying more now may cost you less overall

BY ANDY WEBB



Andy Webb is a money expert at the Money Advice Service. Visit moneyadviceservice.org.uk for details

the Money Advice Service

MANY HOMEOWNERS ARE PAYING LESS EACH MONTH on their mortgage than ever before, thanks to low interest rates. With smaller repayments, you can have a little extra in your pocket each month. Yet with savings rates also incredibly low, there may be better ways of using that cash than simply leaving it in your bank.

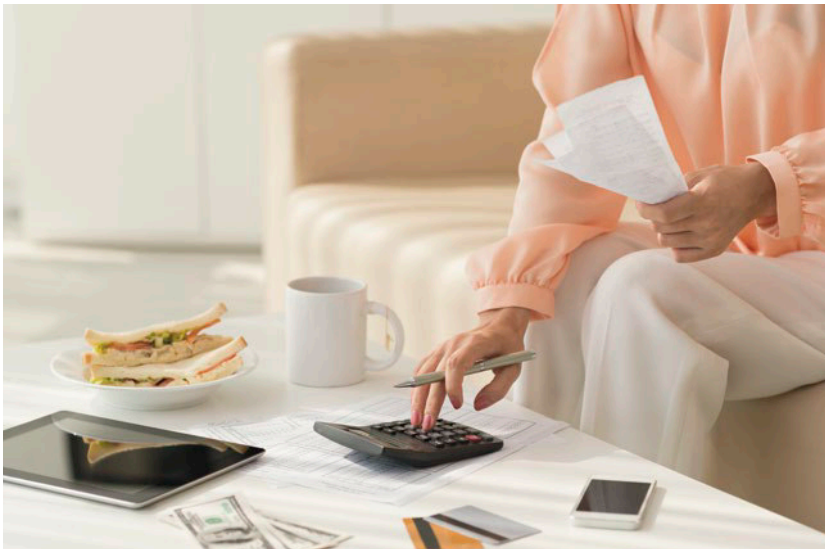
Overpaying your mortgage is one way of getting more from the extra money—yet comparison site comparethemarket.com found only two in five homeowners have done it. The research revealed the biggest barrier was that homeowners didn't believe they could afford extra payments, despite spending an average of £167 every month on luxuries.

The benefits of overpaying your mortgage

Overpaying on your mortgage will reduce the total amount you'll pay in interest and could take years off the length of the mortgage. Adding 10% to the average monthly mortgage would be just £59 according to comparethemarket.com, while it would save £1,870 in interest and reduce the mortgage term by one year and four months. You'll also have a smaller mortgage when interest rates—and your monthly repayments—go up.

Is there a better option?

Before you throw cash at your mortgage—stop! It might not be the best option. Here are three alternatives to consider first:



1. Pay off more expensive debts. If you've got debts elsewhere, say on a credit card or unsecured loan, the interest rate you're being charged is likely to be significantly higher than the one on your mortgage. It's better to clear those debts first.

2. Put it in a pension. If you don't have a pension, consider starting one and putting spare cash in there. The earlier you start, the more money you'll have available when you retire. If you do have one, see if it's worth paying in more.

3. Build a savings buffer. If something were to go wrong—such as losing your job—do you have the funds available to keep you going for a while? The same goes for unexpected costs such as fixing the roof. Can you do this without emergency loans or credit cards? If the answer to either is no, you need to consider if overpaying is the right thing, as once you've put your money in the mortgage it's not usually easy to access it again.

How to overpay your mortgage

If you're OK to overpay and the money isn't better off elsewhere, take a look at your budgets to work out much you can afford to add each month.

You need to check if your mortgage will let you overpay. Some have annual limits, while others have penalties for doing it. Find out if you're charged interest daily or annually. If daily, you can do it any time. If annually, you need to time it so the overpayment counts for the whole year.

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4 Ways To Cut The Cost Of Your Broadband

1. ONLY PAY FOR WHAT YOU NEED

From the speed of the connection to your download limits, it's easy to be upsold for a package you just don't need. If you're a particularly light user, ask to downgrade to a cheaper, capped service.

If you're getting your internet access in a combo with pay TV, take a look at all the channels you have and cut out any you don't watch.

2. CHANGE HOW YOU PAY

With most internet connections you still need to have a landline, and you can often get a discount for paying for 12 months upfront. Paying by direct debit is usually cheaper, while a couple of high-street banks offer 3% cashback on household bills.

3. HAGGLE WITH YOUR SUPPLIER

The best deals often go to new customers—but that shouldn't stop you getting a better price. Phone up and say you're planning to leave unless they can beat a deal elsewhere. Often you'll get a discount to stay.



© PHOVOIR/SHUTTERSTOCK

4. MOVE TO A DIFFERENT SUPPLIER

If you don't get the deal you hoped for after calling up, then it's simple to move to a new provider. Hunt for the best deal through comparison sites. Remember that some special offers will end halfway through your new contract, so what you pay will jump up.

Before you switch, check if you can claim any cashback through sites such as Quidco and TopCashback—though don't make your decision purely based on these discounts, as they aren't always guaranteed.

Special Offers That Aren't That Special

As a nation, we love a discount. Recent research by SunLife found nine in ten of us always look for a deal, helping us get more from our money. But are they always a bargain? Here are three ways you could be better off not spending at all.

THE DEALS THAT MAKE YOU SPEND MORE

Money Advice Service research found we over-spend by £11.74 each time we go to the super-market. In part, this is thanks to multi-buy deals tempting us to buy more than we need.

THE DEALS WE DON'T REALLY NEED

There's often a temptation to get something in a sale because it's a bargain. And it probably is. But will you use it? Or will it sit in its box, hidden under the bed for a couple of years before you eventually throw it away? There's no saving if you're spending money on something you don't really need.

THE DEALS THAT TAKE TOO LONG TO FIND

There are hundreds of online stores to search, voucher codes to find, cash-back to earn. Doing this can bring down the cost of your much-wanted purchase, but what about how long you spend doing this?

If you manage to save a few pennies or pounds on something—but only as the result of an hour surfing the web—you might want to consider if your time could be better spent on bigger savings such as switching your energy, where it takes around 30 minutes to save an average of £300.



© ALEKSANDRA GIGOWSKA/SHUTTERSTOCK

Easy-to-prepare meals and accompanying drinks

Spicy Butterbean & Butternut Squash Stew

BY RACHEL WALKER



Rachel Walker is a food writer for numerous national publications. Visit rachel-walker.co.uk for more details

IT'S THE SEASON of potatoes and parsnips, carrots and celeriac. But even those who love a hearty British dinner can become disheartened at the thought of root-vegetable soups and stews for months ahead.

Whether it's pairing coriander with carrot, cumin with parsnip or chilli with sweet potato, a dash of spice can go a long way to livening up a dish. This stew recipe goes a step further, by using coconut milk instead of traditional stock. The result is a light and aromatic dish, which is best cooked on a dreich day when the flavours will transport diners to warmer climes.

Serves 4

- 2tbsps oil (preferably groundnut or coconut)
- 1 small butternut squash, peeled and cut into bite-sized chunks
- 1 red onion, finely diced
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 bird's eye chilli, finely sliced
- 1tsp garam masala (optional)
- 2tsps turmeric powder
- 1 knob of ginger, peeled and grated
- 2 tomatoes, rough dice
- 400ml coconut milk
- 400ml vegetable stock
- 400g tin of butterbeans
- 350g brown rice
- 1 bunch of fresh coriander, picked
- 1 lime, quartered
- 1 chilli, cut into slivers (optional)



PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIM & ZOË HILL

1. Put a slug of oil into a casserole dish and heat on a medium-high hob setting. Add the butternut squash and then the onion. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes, until the onion is turning translucent and the chunks of butternut squash start to take on some colour.
2. Add the garlic and chilli to the pan, and cook for one more minute. Then add the garam masala, turmeric, chilli, ginger and tomatoes. Pour the coconut milk over everything and then measure out 400ml of vegetable stock in the empty can. Tip it into the pan and finally add the drained butterbeans.
3. Put on the lid and leave the stew to cook at a gentle simmer for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, cook the rice according to pack instructions.
4. Divide the rice between four bowls. Use a ladle to spoon the stew on top. Garnish with a few fresh coriander leaves and serve with a wedge of lime and optional chilli for those who love spice.

Discover more delicious recipes at **readersdigest.co.uk/food-drink**

Hop To It!

Indian Pale Ale (or IPA) is known for its big, hoppy notes—a flavour borne out of necessity rather than taste. In the mid-19th century, British brewers began adding extra hops to the ales that were being shipped to the sub-continent via the Cape of Good Hope, as a preservation method.

The brassy flavour stuck, and IPAs are now seeing a resurgence. It's an ale that showcases the taste of hops, making it the antithesis to bland and bloating mass-produced pints. What's more, IPA pairs well with food. The dry, hoppy notes sit happily alongside spicy food, and the bitter twang has a cooling effect, making it the perfect tipple for Thai or Indian dishes.

IPAs are the darling of the craft-beer movement—responsible for the explosion of small, independent breweries cropping up round Britain (200 opening in the UK each year). It's



created a competitive marketplace, with small-scale brewers pushing up each other's standards.

British IPAs are more subtle than their US counterparts. But those with a robust palette (think black coffee or big red wines) may enjoy IPAs from the west coast of America, where the hops have bold, citric notes.

Beware of the high alcohol levels of hoppy ales. While a "session ale" should fall under the 5% mark, recent trends have seen some creep up to 8%. Fortunately, this is countered by another trend of sharing-size bottles, which are perfect for the dinner table. So buy big—and sip slowly!

TOPS FOR HOPS

- ***Meantime IPA (7.4%),*** £5.35/750ml, Waitrose
- ***Brew Dog Punk Indian Pale Ale (5.6%),*** £2.59/660ml, Tesco
- ***Thornbridge Jaipur Indian Pale Ale (5.9%),*** £2.55/500ml, Ocado
- ***Sierra Nevada Torped (7.2%),*** £28/12 x 350ml, shop.fullers.co.uk



© ISAK55/SHUTTERSTOCK

Pudding of the Month



Shortbread

Simple yet delicious, this is best served plain with a cup of herbal tea or coffee at the end of a meal.

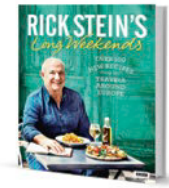
Serves 4

- 250g unsalted butter (room temperature)
- 100g caster sugar
- 350g plain flour

1. Preheat the oven to 170C and line two trays with baking parchment.
2. Cream the butter and sugar until it's starting to turn pale and fluffy.
3. Sift the flour into the mixture and use a spatula to incorporate it roughly.
4. Tip out the mixture onto a floured surface and gently knead it into a dough.
5. Roll out the dough and then cut into shapes.
6. Move the shapes onto a baking parchment, prick with a fork and chill in the fridge for 20 minutes.
7. Bake for 25 minutes, until they are just starting to turn golden at the edges.
8. Gently lift the biscuits to a cooling rack and dust with sugar.

© MARTIN RETTENBERGER/SHUTTERSTOCK

BOOK



Rick Stein's Long Weekends, *BBC Books, £12.50.* Excellent recipes inspired by gourmet breaks around Europe.

BARGAIN



Stove kettle, *Aldi, £17.99.* A new item from Aldi's premium kitchen range—at an absolute snip.

BLOW OUT



Beer Club subscription, *Beer52, £24/month.* Enjoy a monthly dose of eight beers, a snack and a copy of *Ferment* magazine.

BY LYNDA CLARK



Lynda Clark is a homes, property and interiors expert, and is editor of First Time Buyer *magazine*

Turn Up The Heat

AS THE EVENINGS TURN COLDER, there's nothing better than a wood-burning stove to create a wonderful warm and cosy feel—plus a focal point to your sitting room. They're eco-friendly and will suit any space, contemporary or traditional, but it's important to have a large enough area to store the logs. Also, consider whether you want a stove to heat just one room, or attach to the central-heating system to heat other parts of the house.

This Charnwood C-Five stove is built to allow a 12-inch log to fit inside easily and it will produce 5kW of heat. It's Defra-approved, features a single air control for easy operation, and can fit a good supply of logs underneath as well—perfect for those long, festive evenings.

■ **Charnwood C-Five stove, from £894 (ludlowstoves.co.uk)**

Get The Look

Perfect accessories for cultivating warmth.

■ **Fireside companion set of four tools,** *£94.95,* thefarthing.co.uk
■ **Boxster leather studded armchair,** *£860,* alexanderandpearl.co.uk
■ **Set of two rattan log baskets,** *£105,* gardentrading.co.uk
■ **Austrian sheepskin rug,** *£137.50,* amara.com





GO WILD!

An easy way to establish a wildflower garden is to use Meadowmat wild flower turf (from £12.60, meadowmat.com). A good selection of perennial flower plants and grasses are pre-grown onto a special matting system that has at least 85% plant coverage. Simply unroll it onto prepared soil (at any time of year), keep it well-watered for two to three weeks—and watch the floral display unfold!



BEDTIME STORY

Sofa beds are the ideal solution for those extra guests planning to stay a night or two during the festive season



Feather cushions provide super comfort in the **Cutie Pie** sofa bed, *£1,195* (loaf.com).



Style and substance combine in the **Hamlyn** two-seater model, *£799* (made.com).



This **Esme** design is wonderfully easy to use, *£970* (livingitup.co.uk).

From brushing your teeth to finding your keys, your smartphone can help with everything

Phone As Friend

BY OLLY MANN



Olly is a technology expert, radio presenter and podcaster

APPLE IPHONE 7, FROM £599



Another Autumn, another iPhone launch—though for all the talk of "lightest-ever", "fastest-ever", "sharpest-ever", etc, many fundamental specs including size, weight and resolution remain almost identical to last year's 6S. Optical image stabilisation and water-resistant casing are new for iPhone7, but can be found on many premium Android devices already, while the much-hyped replacement of the headphone jack with "airpods" (surely no one will call their earphones that?) is misguided. I suspect most iPhone users won't feel any rush to trade up—but for me, as a heavy-duty photo and podcast user, the double internal-storage capacity is a temptation.



APPLE APP OF THE MONTH: NIGHTGATE, £2.99



It's rare that I find myself describing a game as "beautiful". But Nightgate, which simulates the world in 2398, is stunning: a simple puzzler, set in deep space, with throbbing neon obstacles and an original soundtrack of relaxing ambient trance. Think Pac-Man, but if directed by Alfonso Cuarón and scored by Underworld. Hypnotic.

ORAL-B GENIUS 9000, £140



Oral-B brushes are fast and precise, with long-lasting batteries—I wouldn't be without one. Sadly, I can't say the same for their digital accessories. They used to offer a plastic LCD monitor that emitted a smiley face to indicate you were brushing "properly"—all a bit sinister if you ask me. Their new brush syncs to your smartphone, navigating an animated map of your teeth, so you know where to focus your attention. But why would you risk damaging your phone by clamping it to your bathroom mirror—from where it may fall and break—just for this novelty feature? An unfathomable "upgrade" of an excellent toothbrush.

TRACKR BRAVO, £24.99

I dread to think how many hours each year I spend hunting for my keys, my phone or my TV remote control: usually, they're right under my nose. TrackR is a coin-sized, battery-operated device you attach to whatever you wish to track—even your cat's collar, if you so desire. Then press a button in the accompanying app and the device bleeps until you hunt it down.

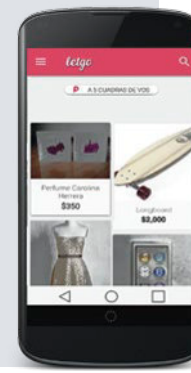


Arguably the best feature is that if it's your phone itself that you've lost (in which case the app would be of little use), the system works the other way round: press the button on the TrackR and it rings your phone. Neat.

ANDROID APP OF THE MONTH: LETGO, FREE

Second-hand bargain hunters seeking a specific item may discover only eBay has the range, reputation and sheer number of users to hook them up. But what if they just want to browse locally, without an auction?

Enter Letgo. This acts like a virtual car-boot sale, where you can search for nearby items, chat directly to the seller, negotiate a cash price and meet up to exchange—all for free. Now, who needs a new second-hand bike?



BY GEORGINA YATES



Georgina is a fashion and beauty editor for numerous travel titles and a blogger at withgeorgia.com

Making Eyes

FALSE EYELASHES AREN'T ALL OTT. They can be subtle and elegant, adding a touch of glamour that's perfect for the party season.

Strip lashes are a good place to start. When applying, make sure you have the right tools in front of you: a pair of scissors; tweezers; the glue; a stand-up mirror and a Q-tip. First, pluck the eyelash from its case and measure the length of it against your eye. Then, using your scissors, trim it to fit. Take your tweezers and use them to hold the eyelash while you paint a layer of glue along the strip from end-to-end. Tilt your head back, look down at the mirror and place the middle of the eyelash as close as you can to the root of your own lashes before adjusting each end. Secure the ends by pressing them down with the Q-tip—the glue will dry clear after a few minutes.

■ **Available at eylure.com**



EYEWEAR

■ False lashes really complement a smoky eye. **Urban Decay**'s Naked Palettes are a high-street sensation and the Naked Smoky version (£38.50, urbandecay.co.uk) has all the colours to create a dramatic look for any skin tone.



CITY SLICKER

■ The limited-edition, city-inspired palettes from **Bobbi Brown** (£85, bobbibrown.co.uk) are pretty *and* practical. Pick either Paris, New York or London and inside is a look to match the city.



CHIC AND COSY

For Her



■ Add a little extra warmth with a stylish wool cape (£99.50, boden.co.uk).

■ Nothing keeps out wind-chill like leather and suede (£35, oliverbonas.co.uk).





■ Wear your favourite boots with this knitted dress for a chic—yet warm—winter look (£85, cathkidston.com).

For Him



■ Keep your toes nice and toasty in these chunky cotton socks (£29.50, boden.co.uk).

■ Stop icy winds from whipping around your neck with a sleek, knitted polo neck (£50, debenhams.com).





■ Ensure that chilly ears are a thing of the past with this fabulous fur-lined hat (£25, marksandspencer.com).

A no-nonsense thriller and soap opera-esque historical fiction will keep you reading for pleasure this month

November Fiction

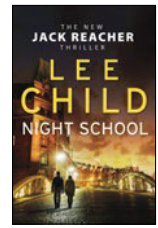
BY JAMES WALTON



James writes and presents the BBC Radio 4 literary quiz **The Write Stuff**

Night School

by Lee Child (Bantham Press, £20)



Sometimes it's hard to beat a proper, no-nonsense, foot-to-the-floor thriller—the kind where it's never difficult to tell the goodies from the baddies, and where the hero doesn't waste any time agonising about what some of us might regard as moral dilemmas. And at those times, I find, it's equally hard to beat Lee Child. In fact, if you've ever wondered why he's become one of the world's best-selling writers, *Night School* should make it pretty clear.

Unlike most of Child's previous 20 Jack Reacher novels, it takes place back in the mid-Nineties, with Reacher still an American military policeman rather than a man who used to be one. Otherwise, it's pretty much what you'd expect and exactly what you'd want: an endlessly exciting page-turner, with a little undertow of melancholy, written in the classic hard-boiled way. (Lots of short sentences. Many without verbs.) Naturally, after being called in by the government to foil a terrorist plot, Reacher doesn't always play by the rules. Just as naturally, though, he gets results—largely because he's

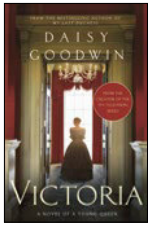
NAME THE AUTHOR

(Answer on p128)

Can you guess the writer from these clues (and, of course, the fewer you need the better)?

1. He's the fourth best-selling novelist of all time.
2. His work was once described by Basil Fawlty as "transatlantic tripe".
3. He wrote *The Carpetbaggers.*

good both at fighting and at making wild guesses that prove to be true.



Victoria

by Daisy Goodwin (Headline Review, £7.99)

Clearly not a woman to underplay a good idea, Daisy Goodwin has followed her scripts for the ITV series *Victoria* with a novel that covers the same material as the first four episodes, often using the same dialogue. Given how popular the series was, I can't imagine its viewers complaining—while anybody who missed the telly version is in for a brazen treat.

Goodwin has obviously done some research into Victoria's early reign (which began, remember, when she was a teenager). Yet, genuine history only ever feels like one of the ingredients in a book that also contains a dash of Jane Austen, a good few pinches of soap opera and a fair dollop of modern rom-com—especially once Albert shows up and the final section becomes an extended will-they-won't-they tease. (Spoiler alert: they will.)

At times, it seems as if a free-spirited 18-year-old girl of our own time has unaccountably found herself crowned a 19th-century British queen. Even so, while serious scholars of the period should probably steer clear, there's no denying that as shameless confections go, this one is hard to resist.

PAPERBACKS

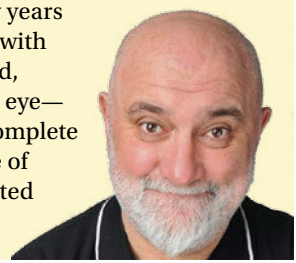
■ ***The Bumper Book of Peanuts: Snoopy and Friends*** **by Charles M Schulz (Canongate, £12.99)** A 400-page collection of the best of the much-loved cartoon strip.

■ ***Those Were the Days*** **by Terry Wogan (Pan, £7.99)** Terry's first—and now, sadly, only—work of fiction: touching, funny and affectionate short stories set in small-town Ireland.

■ ***That's Not English*** **by Erin Moore (Vintage, £8.99)** The differences between British and American English—and what they reveal about the two nations. Full of wit and great facts.

■ ***Cockfosters*** **by Helen Simpson (Vintage, £8.99)** Simpson has built a huge literary reputation on short stories alone—and this collection is as sharp as ever about the lives most of us lead.

■ ***Thatcher Stole My Trousers*** **by Alexei Sayle (Bloomsbury, £8.99)** The alternative-comedy years tackled with a shrewd, amused eye—and a complete absence of rose-tinted glasses.



RD'S RECOMMENDED READ

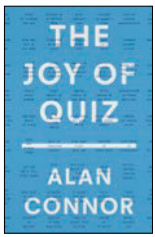
A new book delves into the history—and enduring popularity—of a good, old-fashioned quiz

Fingers On The Buzzers

DESPITE THE FACT that most of us spent our childhood in fear of exams, a recent poll revealed that 81 per cent of British adults are fans of quizzing. In Alan Connor's hugely entertaining book, he both explains and demonstrates why.

The question editor of that quizzer's favourite, BBC2's *Only Connect*, Connor (right) is well-placed to discuss what makes for good quiz questions and to supply tips on how to answer them. But the book also gives us a cheerfully fascinating history of the whole quizzing business: a history that, surprisingly, began only with the growth of radio in the 1930s.

Over the years, quizzing has had its dark times, especially in the 1950s when US TV shows told their favoured competitors the answers in advance,



The Joy of Quiz by Alan Connor is published by Particular Books on November 3 at £14.99.



complete with instructions on how to appear baffled, before looking as if realisation had suddenly dawned. By the Seventies, the TV quiz was essentially dead in America, although Britain still had *University Challenge* and *Mastermind*—famously based on its creator's experience of being interrogated by the Gestapo.

But then came the big turning point in modern quizzing—with the 1980s craze for Trivial Pursuit, as invented by two penniless hippies, Chris Haney and Scott Abbott, who didn't stay

penniless for long. After that, Connor argues, quizzing has never really looked back, either on TV or as part of social life—including, of course, in British pubs.

Here, however, is one person who wasn't so delighted about Trivial Pursuit's success...

"Fred L Worth was a good air-traffic controller but an excellent amasser of trivia. In the 1970s, Worth spent his off-time jotting down disparate micro-facts, garnered from hundreds of thousands of sources, that he published in 1974 as *The Trivia Encyclopedia*. If pop minutiae is a field, he was pioneer in it. But what was to stop anyone else reproducing this information he had so long toiled to amass? Worth used a trick long deployed by compilers of reference works: he included one little lie.

No one calls them 'lies', of course; they tend to be referred to as 'mountweazels', after an entry in the *New Columbia Encyclopedia* (1975), for the photographer Virginia Lillian Mountweazel, who died 'at 31 in an explosion while on assignment for *Combustibles* magazine'.

Mountweazel never existed; she was in the book, said its editors, because '[i]f someone copied Lillian, then we'd know they'd stolen from us.' The mountweazel inserted by Worth was tiny, inconspicuous and eminently plausible. In the entry for

RD EXCLUSIVE: ALAN CONNOR ON GREAT QUIZ QUESTIONS

Great quiz questions come in many forms. There are those where, even if you don't get the answer, you feel you should have once you hear it: **What word was intentionally omitted from the screenplay of *The Godfather*?***

Some leave you completely bewildered at first, making the moment of realisation all the sweeter, like this one (incidentally, Bamber Gascoigne's favourite): **Which female character was played by a male in eight films and several TV series?***

Others give you the satisfaction of combining high art and low culture: **What links Moses, Superman and *The Importance of Being Earnest*'s Ernest?***

And a decent quiz also rewards you for paying attention to the news: **Most people know who sensationally won last season's Premier League—but who was second?***

Information you once knew, you should know, or didn't realise you knew: all part of the addictive joy of the quiz.

* ANSWERS: MAFIA; LASSIE; FOUNDLINGS/ABANDONED AS CHILDREN; ARSENAL

the character Columbo in the detective series of the same name, Worth added: 'First name: Philip.'

In fact, Columbo has no first name; he is, simply, 'Columbo.' Worth's was a wonderful choice of bogus fact. In 1974, it was effectively unverifiable, unless you waited for re-runs and spent every episode glued to the screen.

'Philip' waited.

Come 1984, and Worth was out of work. He had published more trivia books, but trivia hadn't made him rich. And this was certainly not because there was no appetite for the stuff. You only had to look at Trivial Pursuit: in 1984, people shelled out $400 million for much the same material.

Very much the same material.

The game had misprints where Worth's books had misprints, errors where they had errors. In one answer, the colours of the Olympic rings were listed in the same random order as in Worth's Encyclopedia. And then Worth saw the Entertainment question 'What's Columbo's first name?'—with 'Philip' on the back of the card. 'I worked ten years for their glory and financial gain,' he said of the makers of Trivial Pursuit. And he launched a multimillion-dollar lawsuit, mortgaging his house to pay his legal fees.

> ***The game had misprints where Worth's books had misprints and errors where they had errors***

Worth reckoned that 32 per cent of the questions in Trivial Pursuit were lifted from his Encyclopedia and its sequel in total. Faced with the evidence, Haney and Abbott could hardly challenge Worth's charges. Yes, well over a thousand of their questions had in fact been 'written' by lifting a fact from Worth and plonking a question mark at the end. All they could do was moot that that's what they thought encyclopaedias were for: to be a work of reference from which you can take what you like.

And that was enough. The district court agreed, as did the appeals court. Game over. No doubt this seemed harsh to Worth, but writing down a fact about the world does not give you ownership of it, in law... or in fact.



AND THE NAME OF THE AUTHOR IS...

Harold Robbins (who also wrote *A Stone for Danny Fisher*, made into the Elvis film *King Creole*).

Books

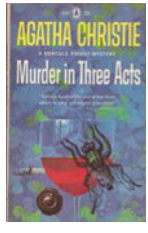
THAT CHANGED MY LIFE



Graham Moore is the best-selling author of *The Sherlockian* and the Academy Award-winning screenwriter of *The Imitation Game*. His new novel *The Last Days of Night* is out now.

Murder in Three Acts

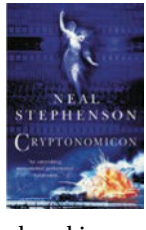
BY AGATHA CHRISTIE



My mother is a mystery-book devotee and, when I was having trouble learning to read, we'd sit in my bed at home in Chicago and take it in turns to read a paragraph. It was the first novel I read cover-to-cover and I credit so much of my future work to that formative experience. Not only did it give me a love of crime fiction but, more significantly, it taught me that literature can be a shared experience.

Cryptonomicon

BY NEAL STEPHENSON

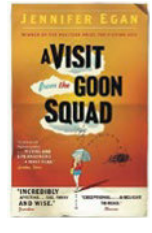


This sprawling novel showed me that historical fiction need not be dry, but can be lively and funny. Stephenson tackles code-breaking during the Second World War era and computer technology during the late 1990s. He asks the reader to take the science seriously, but depicts the story with great humour.

I'd long known of Alan Turing, but Stephenson's characterisation of him was a revelation; I saw how a writer can bring a real person to life for a modern audience.

A Visit from the Goon Squad

BY JENNIFER EGAN



Egan uses a technique that I drew on when writing *The Imitation Game*. She shifts the narrative from different viewpoints and times, uses a myriad of voices and styles that ultimately says to the reader, "I've done a lot of the work, but now you have to join in and work it out for yourself."

With my latest book, my greatest hope is that the reader will want to get other people discussing the book's topics. I'll just have started the conversation.

As told to Caroline Hutton

You Couldn't Make It Up

Win £50 for your true, funny stories! Go to readersdigest.co.uk/contact-us or facebook.com/readersdigestuk

OUR SON was learning to drive and kept an eye out for road signs so he'd get to know what they were, even when we were out walking.

One day we saw the sign with a motorcycle on the top of a car. He wasn't sure what that one meant—but his little sister tried to help him out. She said solemnly, "Beware of low-flying motorbikes."

CARYS McCAULEY, *London*

IT WAS THE END OF THE DAY when I parked my police van in front of the station. As I gathered my equipment, my canine partner Jake was barking and I saw a little boy staring in at me.

"Is that a dog you've got back there?" he asked.

"It certainly is," I replied.

The boy looked at me and then towards the back of the van. Finally he said, "What did he do?"

ROBERT THOMPSON, *Lancashire*

MY GRANDAD TOM, 79, was rather indignant when a friend suggested to him that his teeth weren't his own.



"My mother wants to know if I've been a good boy"

"Of course they are!" he responded. "I've got the receipt to prove it."

DEMI ROBERTS, *Denbighshire*

SHORTLY AFTER the 2015 floods, which once again devastated Keswick in the Lake District, my husband and I were having coffee in a cafe in Keswick. We overheard two men discussing possible ways of preventing future flooding.

The first chap said he'd heard that

CARTOON: GUTO DIAS

elsewhere in the country, a flood-prevention scheme had included planting new woodlands in strategic areas, and had already proved to be very successful.

The second chap replied, "That can't possibly work. Trees can't drink that fast." **CHRISTINE WALKER,** *Cumbria*

I HAVE AN ELDER BROTHER who was very hot-tempered when he was young. My parents tried many ways to teach him to keep his cool, but in the end they simply gave him an axe and told him to go outside and chop some wood for the fire—and not stop until he'd controlled his temper.

My wife was telling this story to a work colleague, who asked if the therapy had helped now he was a adult. "It must have done," replied my wife. "He's got a very good job with the Forestry Commission now."

ALEXA POOLE, *Flintshire*

MY GRANDFATHER decided to take my five-year-old son out on his own for the first time. They went to visit my grandmother, then went for something to eat. My grandfather bought him a Happy Meal, but my son changed his mind and said he wanted a cheeseburger. So my grandfather got him one, and then he said he didn't want the cheese, so they had to take that out. He ordered an ice-cream sundae—and that went back too as it was the "wrong taste".

Grandfather came home later and, when asked if they'd had a good time, commented, "The next time he comes out with me, he'll be 18."

JEENA SUMNER, *London*

MY 25-YEAR-OLD SON is a fire-fighter in the US. On Halloween, he and a few of his colleagues had to go around a housing estate doing fire-safety checks. They called on one elderly gentleman, who answered the door in his pyjamas looking very disgruntled.

Before they could say anything, he muttered, "You're getting a bit too old for this, if you don't mind me saying," and promptly shut the door on them. **SALI THOMAS,** *Clywd*

THE CHILDREN in my nursery class come out with some funny things. I was talking to them about eating healthily and asked what they needed to grow up nice and strong. One little girl answered, "Birthdays!"

ABIGAIL GEORGE, *Clwyd*

MY FATHER often passes on books he's read to me. There are frequently several at one time, so in order to decide what to read first, I usually seek a critique from him.

Commenting on a recent David Baldacci novel, he advised, "It takes a bit of getting into." I was therefore amused to notice he'd bent the corner over on page one!

PETER SMITHSON, *Hexham*

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RDN028

IT PAYS TO INCREASE YOUR

Word Power

This month, we feature words from the 2016 Crossword Puzzle Tournament. Competitors encountered these words over eight challenging rounds. If you feel puzzled, peek at the next page for answers.

BY EMILY COX & HENRY RATHVON

1. **bugbear** *n*—A: petty crime. B: character flaw. C: object of dread.

2. **sopor** *n*—A: salty taste. B: deep sleep. C: second-year cadet.

3. **parlance** *n*—A: secret meeting. B: manner of speaking. C: equality.

4. **prate** *v*—A: chatter. B: criticise. C: make a grand show.

5. **bireme** *n*—A: ancient ship propelled by oars. B: marshy tract. C: case of illogic.

6. **weir** *n*—A: ghost. B: mirror image. C: dam in a stream or river.

7. **ovine** *adj*—A: of eggs. B: of sheep. C: of grapes.

8. **acolyte** *n*—A: spiritual healer. B: follower. C: circle of stones.

9. **vituperate** *v*—A: give new life to. B: hiss. C: use harsh language.

10. **lasciviously** *adv*—A: with lust. B: in a careless way. C: snidely.

11. **tittle** *n*—A: dot in writing. B: small songbird. C: mob snitch.

12. **auspices** *n*—A: flavourings. B: terms of forgiveness. C: patronage.

13. **arboreal** *adj*—A: concerning trees. B: about winds. C: from the north.

14. **tiki** *n*—A: kitschy cocktail shaker. B: curry sauce. C: wooden or stone image of a Polynesian god.

15. **anathema** *n*—A: main topic of conversation. B: the complete opposite. C: someone or something intensely disliked.

Answers

1. bugbear—[C] object of dread. "Rain is the biggest *bugbear* for the organisers of our town's annual autumn festival."

2. sopor—[B] deep sleep. "Rip Van Winkle wasn't just napping—he was in a doozy of a *sopor*."

3. parlance—[B] manner of speaking. "Juan's keynote speech was 'mic drop' good, to use the current *parlance*."

4. prate—[A] chatter. "Do you have anything useful to tell me, or are you just *prating* into the air?"

5. bireme—[A] ship propelled by oars. "The centipede's legs remind me of the oars on a Roman *bireme*."

6. weir—[C] dam in a stream or river. "The river's *weir* helps to prevent flooding."

7. ovine—[B] of sheep. "The *ovine* residents of our farm always bleat loudly when they are sheared."

8. acolyte—[B] follower. "We couldn't even hear the speaker over the chants of his fervent *acolytes*."

9. vituperate—[C] use harsh language. "You will get further by being polite than by *vituperating* at full volume."

10. lasciviously—[A] with lust. "Ali dipped her finger into the bowl of frosting and licked it *lasciviously*."

11. tittle—[A] dot in writing. "Ryan dots each *i* with a perfect *tittle*."

12. auspices—[C] patronage. "Under the *auspices* of her mother, little Courtenay has opened a lemonade stand."

13. arboreal—[A] concerning trees. "The birds in my yard prefer their *arboreal* nests to my birdhouses."

14. tiki—[C] wooden or stone image of a Polynesian god. "I travelled to Maui and returned with a lei, a ukulele and a wooden *tiki*."

15. anathema—[C] someone or something intensely disliked. "I don't mind snakes, but spiders are *anathema*."

WORD OF THE DAY*

LAMPROPHONY: loudness and clarity of enunciation.

Alternative suggestions:

"The buzzing noise made by a faulty fluorescent strip."

"Grown sheep acting childishly."

"The art of false prophesying about how well your light bulbs will perform."

VOCABULARY RATINGS
9 & below: novice
10–12: mavern
13–15: virtuoso

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READERS DIGEST OCTOBER 2016

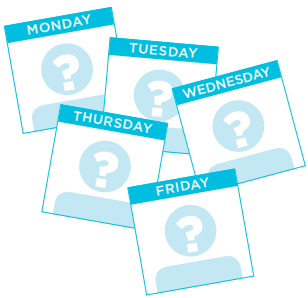
BrainTeasers

Challenge yourself by solving these puzzles and mind stretchers, then check your answers on page 139.

IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY

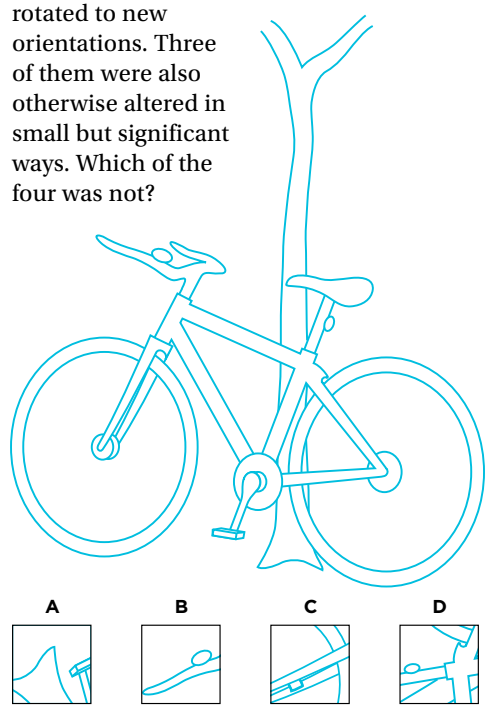
Ahmad, Brielle, Dina, Ed and Ginny have their birthdays on consecutive days, but not necessarily in that order. This year, all of their birthdays land between Monday and Friday. Can you figure out whose birthday is on each weekday?

- Ahmad's birthday is as many days before Ginny's as Brielle's is after Ed's.
- Dina is two days older than Ed.
- Ginny's birthday is on Thursday.



DETAILS, DETAILS

Four details from the drawing below were sampled and rotated to new orientations. Three of them were also otherwise altered in small but significant ways. Which of the four was not?

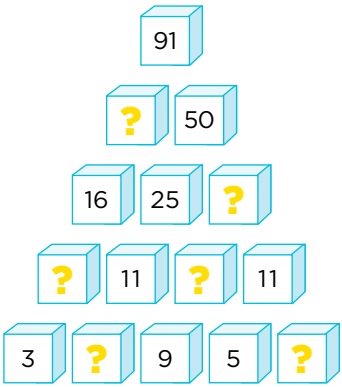


(IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY) MARCEL DANESI; (DETAILS, DETAILS) DARREN RIGBY

(PATTERN FINDER) MARCEL DANESI; (IT KEEPS TURNING UP) DARREN RIGBY; (PATH PUZZLE) RODERICK KIMBALL OF PATHPUZZLES.COM

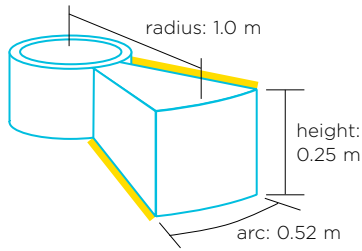
PATTERN FINDER

The numbers on the cubes follow a pattern. Can you determine what it is and provide the missing numbers?



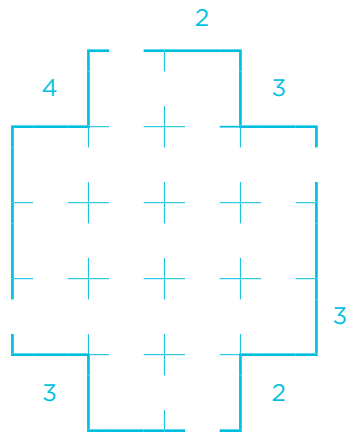
IT KEEPS TURNING UP

The diagram below represents one piece of a spiral staircase. The round part goes over a post, and the edges (marked in yellow) of the stairs connect. Some dimensions are marked (rounded to two digits), and the staircase goes once around the post. Rounding off to the nearest metre, how tall would the completed staircase be?



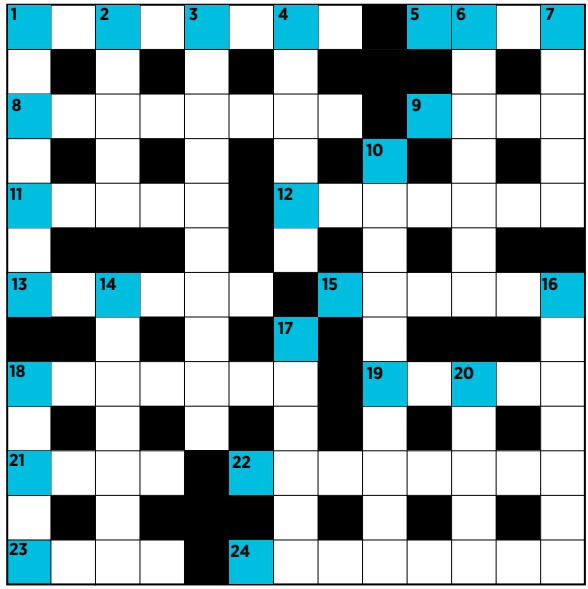
PATH PUZZLE

Draw a path that goes from one of the grid's four openings to another. As the path winds from one cell to the next, it can move up, down, left or right but not diagonally. It cannot pass through any cell more than once. The numbers around the grid tell how many cells the path must pass through in the corresponding row or column. Numbers that are adjacent to both a row and a column indicate the total number of the cells in the path from both the row and the column. If a row or column has no number, then the path may pass through as many or as few of its cells as you like.



CROSSWISE

Test your general knowledge



ACROSS

1 Fertiliser or animal feed (8)
5 Karate blow (4)
8 Normal, typical (8)
9 Comfortable and warm (4)
11 Sign up for a course (5)
12 Slender and graceful (7)
13 Red fruit used in salads (6)
15 Walking aid or support (6)
18 End a phone call (4,3)
19 Chief fallen angel (5)
21 Fossil fuel (4)
22 Reproduce the conditions of (8)
23 Exude (4)
24 Outstanding event (in history) (8)

DOWN

1 Speediest (7)
2 Flight of treads (5)
3 Variation (in voice pitch) (10)
4 Missiles shot from a bow (6)
6 Put (washing) to dry (4,3)
7 Miss ___, Muppet (5)
10 Scan taken of a pregnant woman (10)
14 Official authority (7)
16 Domineer (a husband) (7)
17 Sierra Leone's continent (6)
18 Competitions for runners (5)
20 Jewelled head-ornament (5)

ANSWERS

Across:
1 Fishmeal **5** Chop **8** Standard **9** Snug **11** Enrol **12** Willowy **13** Tomato **15** Crutch **18** Ring Off **19** Satan **21** Coal **22** Simulate **23** Seep **24** Landmark

Down:
1 Fastest **2** Stair **3** Modulation **4** Arrows **6** Hang Out **7** Piggy **10** Ultrasound **14** Mandate **16** Henpeck **17** Africa **18** Races **20** Tiara

BrainTeasers: *Answers*

IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY

Monday is Dina's birthday. Tuesday is Ahmad's. Wednesday is Ed's. Thursday is Ginny's and Friday is Brielle's.

DETAILS, DETAILS

D. In A, the root of the tree was moved closer to the bicycle pedal. In B, the rear handlebar was deleted. In C, an extra pair of lines were added.

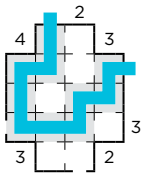
PATTERN FINDER

Each cube's number is the sum of the two numbers on the cubes below it to the left and the right. The missing numbers, from top to bottom and left to right, are **41, 25, 5, 14, 2** and **6**.

IT KEEPS TURNING UP

The staircase will have the same radius as this piece, 1.0 m. Its circumference will be 1.0 m × 2 × 3.14 = 6.28 m (because circumference equals radius x 2 x pi). Twelve stairs will complete that circle (6.28 m / 0.52 m ≈ 12), so the height of the staircase is 12 × 0.25 m, which equals **3 metres**.

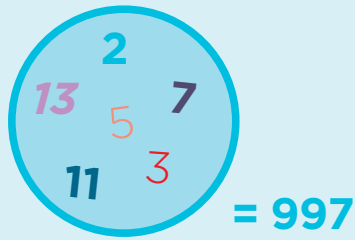
PATH PUZZLE



£50 PRIZE QUESTION

Answer published in the December issue

Using some or all of the six smallest prime numbers in the circle with any of the four standard mathematical operations (+, -, x and ÷), make a calculation to produce the highest three-digit prime number (997).



The first correct answer we pick on November 3 wins £50!* Email **excerpts @readersdigest.co.uk**

ANSWER TO OCTOBER'S PRIZE QUESTION

RED or TAN

The number of letters in each tile is one less than those in the following row. Hence, there must be only three letters in the empty tile.

AND THE £50 GOES TO...

Mary Crouch, Tonbridge

* Entry is open only to residents of the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and Republic of Ireland aged 18 or over. It is not open to employees of Vivat Direct Limited (t/a Reader's Digest), its subsidiary companies and all other persons associated with the competition.

Laugh!

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COLIN WAS IN HOSPITAL on his death bed. The family decided to call Colin's priest to be with him in his final moments.

As the priest stood by the bed, Colin's condition seemed to deteriorate, and Colin motioned for someone to pass him a pen and paper. The priest quickly got a pen and paper and lovingly handed it to Colin. But before he had a chance to read the note, Colin died. The priest, feeling that now wasn't the right time to read it, put the note in his jacket pocket.

While speaking at the funeral, the priest remembered the note. Reaching deep into his pocket, the priest said, "And you know what, I've just remembered that right before Colin died, he handed me a note. Knowing Colin, I'm sure it was something inspiring that we can all benefit from hearing."

With that introduction the priest pulled out the note and opened it up. The note said "*You're standing on my oxygen tube!*" **HEIDI CLARK,** ***Yorkshire***

WHY DID THE physics teacher break up with the biology teacher?

There was no chemistry.

SEEN ONLINE

THE KANGAROO MOTHER became incredibly itchy around her belly. She opened her pouch and shouted into it, "How often have I told you not to eat crunchy biscuits in bed?"

SEEN AT FACEBOOK.COM

I'M SO IN LOVE with my boyfriend right now. Everything is perfect, but we want totally different things in bed. Like, he's always turning the lights on, you know what I'm saying? And I shut them off, and he turns them on, and the other day, he's like, "Amy, why are you so shy? You know, you have a beautiful body."

I was like, "Oh my God, you're so cute. You think I don't want you to see me?" **COMEDIAN AMY SCHUMER**

TWO FACTORY WORKERS were talking. "I know how to get some time off from work," said the man.

"How do you think you'll do that?" said the other.

He proceeded to demonstrate by climbing up to the rafters and hanging upside down. The boss walked in, saw the worker hanging from the ceiling and asked him what on earth he was doing.

"I'm a light bulb," he answered.

"I think you need some time off," said the boss. So the man jumped down and walked out.

The second worker began walking out too. The boss asked her where on earth she was going.

"Home," she said. "I can't work in the dark." **GRAHAME JONES,** *London*

WHY DO the French eat snails?

They can't stand fast food.

SEEN AT SHORT-FUNNY.COM

AN ESKIMO brings his friend to his home for a visit. When they arrive, his friend asks, puzzled, "So where's your igloo?"

"Oh no! I must've left the iron on."

SEEN AT FACEBOOK.COM

A COWBOY walks into a German car showroom and he says, "Audi!"

COMEDIAN TIM VINE

HUSBAND: "Oh, the weather is lovely today. Shall we go out for a quick jog?"

Wife: "Haha! I love the way you pronounce, 'Shall we go out and have a cake?' " **SEEN ONLINE**

PERFECT TIMING

You couldn't take these shots if you tried (as seen at thepoke.co.uk)







MY AUNT MARGE has been ill for so long, we've started to call her "I can't believe she's not better."

COMEDIAN MILTON JONES

WOMAN: "Do you drink beer?"

Man: "Yes."

Woman: "How many beers a day?"

Man: "Usually about three."

Woman: "How much do you pay per beer?"

Man: "About £5 for a good one."

Woman: "And how long have you been drinking?"

Man: "About 20 years, I suppose."

Woman: "So a beer costs £5 and you have three beers a day, which puts your spending each month at £450. In one year, it would be about £5,400—correct?"

Man: "Correct."

Woman: "If in one year you spend £5,400, not accounting for inflation, in the past 20 years you've spent a total of £108,000—correct?"

Man: "Correct."

Woman: "Did you know that if you didn't drink so much beer, that money could have been put in a step-up interest savings account—and after accounting for compound interest for the past 20 years, you could have now bought a Ferrari?"

Man: "Do you drink beer?"

Woman: "No."

Man: "Where's your Ferrari?"

MICHAEL HARKIN, ***Londonderry***

I'VE NEVER LAUGHED a woman into bed, but I've laughed one out of bed many times.

COMEDIAN JACK WHITEHALL



A HEALTHY APPETITE

The hashtag ***#CheeseburgerPickupLines*** *has been causing much hilarity over on Twitter. How would you phrase yours?*

"Lettuce leaf, there are burgers here that cheese me off. We could pickle a better place to ketchup."

"Is your name Patty? Because you're making me melt."

"Wanna come over for Netflix and grill? Nothing cheesy, I promise."

"It's OK if you're gluten-free—I can hold your buns."

"You've never had cheddar than me. I'll make you feel Gouda."

"You're so saucy."

60-Second Stand-Up

We caught up with cheeky chap **Daniel Sloss**



WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE OF YOUR OWN JOKES?
I could tell who my mum's least favourite child was when she said she was blessed with me, gifted with my sister—and diagnosed with my brother.

WHAT'S THE BEST PART OF YOUR CURRENT TOUR OR SET?
Some of the European cities we get to go to, such as Lithuania and Estonia. The first time we went, we thought, *How the hell are they going to understand what we're saying?* But they speak better English than us.

WHAT'S YOUR MOST MEMORABLE HECKLE EXPERIENCE?
I was once being heckled in Glasgow when a lady from a hen do smacked the heckler and said, "You let that little boy finish."

DO YOU HAVE ANY FUNNY TALES ABOUT A TIME YOU BOMBED ON STAGE?
I once did a TV warm up and I think the average age of the audience was dead. I was doing jokes about rude things—because I was 17, and that's all I knew what to talk about. An old lady in the front row, who was in a wheelchair, used what was probably the last of her remaining strength to grab her walking stick and try and hit me off the stage.

WHO'S YOUR COMEDY INSPIRATION?
Bill Burgh. He says things you don't agree with, but still makes you laugh.

IF YOU COULD HAVE A SUPER POWER, WHAT WOULD IT BE?
I'd slow down time so I could get really good at football and play for Scotland.

Daniel is on tour with his *SO?* show. Visit danielsloss.com for details.

Beat the Cartoonist!



Think of a witty caption for this cartoon—the three best suggestions, along with the cartoonist's original, will be posted on our website in mid-November. If your entry gets the most votes, you'll win **£100 and a framed copy of the cartoon**, with your caption.

Submit to **captions@readersdigest.co.uk** or online at **readersdigest.co.uk/caption** by November 11. We'll announce the winner in our January issue.

September's Winner



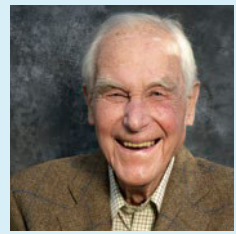
The professionals can take comfort from the fact that cartoonist Steve Jones came second with his caption, **"You've taken in another stray, haven't you?"** Sadly for them, reader Dave McKenna attracted three times as many votes for his effort, **"The good news is, I've solved the mouse problem..."** Another thrashing.

IN THE DECEMBER ISSUE



"This is where my heart lives"

Tony Robinson on comedy, activism and being a knight.



Reaching the Age of 100

Three centenarians share their secrets for longevity.

Plus

- **"I Remember": Monty Don**
- **The Hand-In-Hand Schools**
- **Food & Drink Special**

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